

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail



2020 STATE OF THE TRAIL

The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (Chesapeake Trail) is a 3,000-mile-long water trail that highlights the landscapes and stories of Native people who lived here prior to English colonization; the voyages of Captain John Smith and his crew from 1607-1609, which were documented in remarkably precise maps and journals; and the natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. There are countless ways to explore the trail—by land and by water—as it winds through Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, and the District of Columbia.

Top photo: Kayakers paddle along the Chesapeake Trail, which runs through Jefferson Patterson Park in Calvert County, Md. (Will Parson, Chesapeake Bay Program)

Conservation & Trail Protection

🌊 The Chesapeake Trail commissioned and assisted in the completion of an **Archeological Overview and Assessment (AOA) of Werowocomoco**, residence of Powhatan and the site of the first meetings between Native leaders and English colonists. The 183-page report summarizes the current state of archeological research and offers direction for future preservation and management of the archeological resources found on this historical site, which, in 2016, was acquired and protected by the National Park Service as part of the Chesapeake Trail. Staff at the trail manage the site in collaboration with staff at Colonial National Historical Park in Yorktown, Va., and seven tribal partners.

The AOA will be used to inform geophysical surveys and future archeological testing in partnership with tribal governments, as well as help NPS managers understand the complexity of human experience on the landscape from thousands of years ago to present day, including Native life, early Colonial occupation, and the experiences of enslaved Africans and African Americans. NPS is working diligently to provide public programming at Werowocomoco within the next few years.

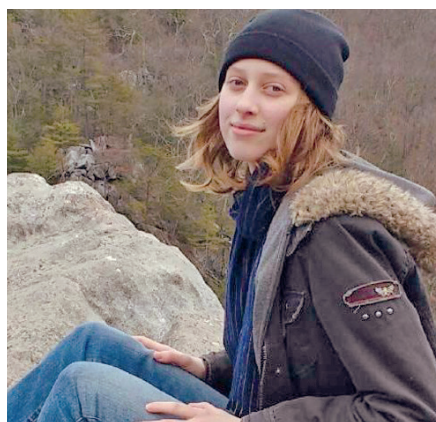
🌊 The Harford Land Trust of Harford County, Md., partnered with Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland's Department of Natural Resources, and Harford County Government to permanently preserve **Belle Vue Farm**—a 347-acre property that sits on one mile of undeveloped Chesapeake Bay coastline located along the Chesapeake Trail. The property will serve as a future county park for the enjoyment of the public and will be managed by Harford County's Department of Parks & Recreation. Learn more about this conservation success story [here](#).

🌊 **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. All ICL reports are now available on the [trail's website](#), which also features a timeline of ICL research.

Youth & Education



Cheyenne Sherwin



Remi Shaull-Thompson

Top left: Ancestral Lands interns Connor Tuppece (left) and Cheyenne Sherwin (right) perform curatorial work at Colonial National Historical Park. (NPS)

Top middle: The Chesapeake Trail's collectible trading cards are a resource for children to begin learning about life in the Chesapeake Bay from an indigenous perspective. (NPS)

Top right: Connor Tuppece performs at a pow wow in full regalia. (Connor Tuppece)

🌀 The trail piloted a **Werowocomoco Ancestral Lands Corps Individual Placement Program**, a 26-week opportunity for tribal youth to be involved in park operations, preservation, and the visitor experience at Werowocomoco. Participants earn educational credit as well as direct hiring authority for two years. The 2020 Werowocomoco Ancestral Lands interns were **Cheyenne Sherwin** and **Connor Tuppece**, who completed their internship from August 2020 to February 2021. Cheyenne Sherwin, Mikisew Cree First Nation of Alberta, Canada, is a student at the University of Montana, where she majors in Native American studies and anthropology, with a focus on archeology. She is from western North Carolina. Connor Tuppece is a citizen of the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe in King William, Va. He is an avid outdoorsman with a heart for conservation and applies his cultural heritage to everything he does.

Ms. Sherwin and Mr. Tuppece were based at Colonial National Historical Park and worked alongside NPS rangers and staff in four different divisions within the park—Interpretation & Education, Law Enforcement, Facility Management, and Resource Management—in order to become familiar with how the divisions work together and operate within the greater national park system. Each division provided opportunities to apply skills and knowledge to those same operations at Werowocomoco. To learn more about the Ancestral Lands program, click [here](#).

🌀 **Remi Shaull-Thompson** served as the trail's interpretation intern from June 2020 to June 2021 through the **Student Conservation Association and AmeriCorps**. In her work at the trail, she gained professional experience in the fields of interpretation and communications within NPS while deepening her understanding of the Chesapeake Bay's cultural heritage and the management of historic sites. In the first half of her tenure, she wrote blogs and social media posts, assisted with funding proposals, and created a coloring book and the first edition of **collectible trading cards for children** that highlight aspects of American Indian heritage specific to the tribes of the Chesapeake Bay region. For example, on the "Pow Wow" card pictured top middle, we learn about modern-day celebrations of American Indian culture. In the second half of her tenure, she updated the trail's website with new content, including interpretive maps and articles. Remi graduated in 2019 from Princeton University with degrees in English, creative writing, and environmental studies.



Hannah Dickinson

🌊 The trail and its principal nonprofit partner, **Chesapeake Conservancy**, hosted a **communications intern** over the summer. **Hannah Dickinson**, an Oklahoma native and citizen of the Cherokee Nation, completed the eight-week internship in late August 2020 and returned to the University of Oklahoma to finish her degree in human communicative theory. Hannah wrote press releases, blogs and social media posts, and newsletters on behalf of the trail. She continues to pursue her passion for working with diverse communities and bringing more attention to tribal heritage and environmental conservation.

🌊 The trail hosted a fourth-grade math and Virginia studies teacher, **Carly Zeh**, as a **Teacher Ranger Teacher** focused on developing lesson plans and curricula, including a new Junior Ranger Program booklet devoted exclusively to Werowocomoco. The booklet will become a part of the curriculum for fourth-grade students who will one day visit Werowocomoco on school field trips.



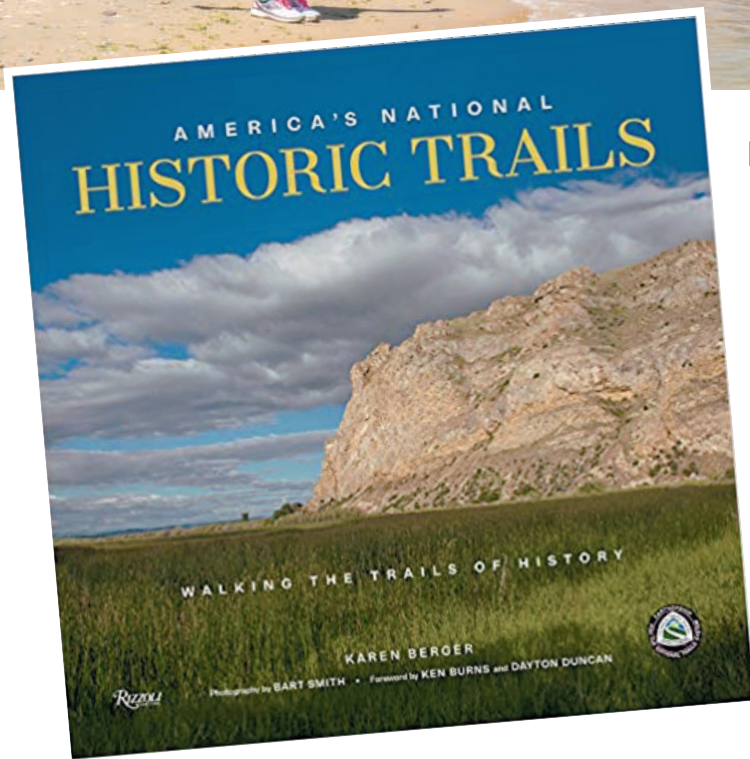
Carly Zeh

🌊 **Junior Ranger Program:** Nearly 1,000 kids were sworn in as Junior Rangers on the Chesapeake Trail in 2020. Both the [Chesapeake Trail Junior Ranger activity book](#) and the [Susquehanna River edition](#) of the activity book proved to be especially popular resources for children during COVID.



🌊 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the trail and Susquehanna National Heritage Area hosted **Canoemobile** for 600 fifth-graders over the course of four days for a safe and unique opportunity to paddle the Chesapeake Trail on a free-flowing section of the Susquehanna River in a 25-foot canoe. Students learned about the trail and the river and gained some history and background on the Susquehannock Indians. The program also hosted a public event, which brought out dozens of families on a chilly Saturday. For many of these students and families, this was their first paddling experience and their first time on the Susquehanna.

Top photo: Fifth-grade students paddle the Chesapeake Trail on the Susquehanna River as part of the Canoemobile program in October 2019. (Susquehanna National Heritage Area)



Publications

In September 2020, trail staff relaunched the trail's monthly newsletter (email cajo_info@nps.gov to sign up). Also, in the fall, the Chesapeake Trail was featured in a book published by Rizzoli International Publications in association with the Partnership for the National Trails System. Written by Karen Berger and photographed by Bart Smith, *America's National Historic Trails: Walking the Trails of History* takes readers on a journey of our nation's 19 national historic trails, including the Chesapeake Trail. The book caught the attention of *USA Today* and made it onto *People* magazine's list of "The Best Coffee-Table Books of 2020."



A popular site along the trail, Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary protects about 1,700 acres of unique tidal freshwater marshes, forested wetlands, creeks, and meadows along the Patuxent River in southern Anne Arundel County, Md. (Will Parson, Chesapeake Bay Program)

Trail Programming During COVID-19

COVID-related restrictions required trail staff to work from home and prevented many traditional public programs from taking place in 2020, including in-person field trips, but the Chesapeake Trail and its partners remained committed to providing safe and meaningful opportunities to explore the trail and learn about the rich history of the Chesapeake Bay region.

The trail was able to successfully and safely launch the Werowocomoco Ancestral Lands Corps Program. When local health guidance and park rules permitted, interns were in the field. At other times, intern activities were adjusted to include telework options.

Top photo: Calvert Cliffs, Lusby, Md. (Yazan Hasan, Chesapeake Conservancy)



John Maounis

🌊 **IN MEMORIAM: John Maounis**, former superintendent of the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and original co-convenor of the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, died peacefully at home in Santa Rosa, California, from pancreatic cancer on December 4, 2020. When he assumed his superintendent role in 2007, his first order of business was to establish a management plan for the Chesapeake Trail, the legislation having just passed. Under the plan, he led the efforts to identify sites along the trail route for protection and interpretation. John also helped to advance the concept of Indigenous Cultural Landscapes and facilitated NPS's first steps toward the eventual protection of Werowocomoco as an NPS site in 2016. His legacy of commitment to the bay and the impact he made on so many will be felt for decades to come.



Erin Montgomery

🌊 **NEW HIRE:** In July 2020, **Erin Montgomery** came on board as the **communications associate** for the Chesapeake Trail and Chesapeake Conservancy, the trail's principal nonprofit partner. Erin assists both organizations by helping to integrate communications tools, strategies, and messaging, and serves as lead writer on newsletters, reports, and other communications projects. She is a lifelong Marylander and native of Annapolis, where she is duty-stationed.



Top photo: An aerial view of Werowocomoco, an NPS site rich in archeological resources in Gloucester County, Va. (John Henley)



Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge (NPS)



Ground was broken on phase one of the revitalization of the old J.B. Robinson Oyster House site along the Seaford River Walk. (Chesapeake Conservancy)

Chesapeake Conservancy

The trail's principal nonprofit partner, Chesapeake Conservancy, celebrated successes at three spots along the trail:

🌊 In June 2020, Chesapeake Conservancy partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy to **conserve an additional 438 acres of land** at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, part of the Taylors Trail Sand Ridge Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) in Wicomico County, Md.

🌊 In October 2020, Chesapeake Conservancy released new [virtual tours](#) of **Tangier Island** and the **Pocomoke River**. Virtual visitors can see the beauty of the Chesapeake and explore these special places from their computer, device, or mobile phone.

🌊 In December 2020, the Conservancy and partners broke ground on phase one of the revitalization of the old J.B. Robinson Oyster House site along the **Seaford River Walk in Seaford, Del.** This initial phase will be focused on enhancing access to the Nanticoke River and building a [new community park](#) that will feature a performance deck, boat docking facilities, and a kayak launch. This phase is anticipated to be complete by spring 2021, open for public use by summer 2021.

🌊 The Partnership for the National Trails System's first Virtual Workshop took place October 21–29, 2020. One topic of discussion was the expansion of partnerships within and beyond trail corridors. **Joel Dunn**, president and CEO of Chesapeake Conservancy, and **Joe McCauley**, Chesapeake fellow at the Conservancy, joined **Chief Anne Richardson** of the Rappahannock Tribe to present on the ongoing effort to preserve **Fones Cliffs**, a key historic site along the Chesapeake Trail in the heart of the Rappahannock Tribe's homeland.



Werowocomoco exhibit at the Gloucester County Visitor Center. (Katey Legg, Gloucester Parks, Recreation & Tourism)



Sultana Education Foundation instructor Brad Hirsh shows replica stone tools used by Native Americans of the Chesapeake region to students on a "virtual field trip." (Chris Cerino, Sultana Education Foundation)

Susquehanna National Heritage Area

With COVID-19 protocols in place, Susquehanna National Heritage Area was able to restart programming at the Chesapeake Trail's Visitor Contact Station at the **Zimmerman Center for Heritage** in July. Representing 18 states and one foreign country, 3,167 visitors toured the center and enjoyed beautiful views of the Chesapeake Trail on the Susquehanna River. Of those visitors, 1,075 were able to experience the trail on the River Discovery Boat Tour, a popular guided tour to learn about the history of the Susquehanna River and the indigenous peoples who inhabited the area for thousands of years. Visitors also included budding Junior Rangers and passport stampers who found their way to the center or its sister location across the river, **Columbia Crossing**.

Native Lands County Park: Located just behind the Zimmerman Center, the trailhead for Native Lands County Park remained open, providing hiking opportunities and self-guided tours of this significant American Indian site.

Gloucester County Visitor Center

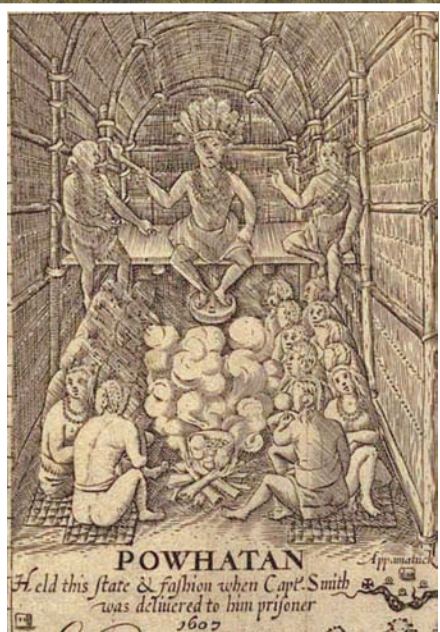
In 2020, progress was made on a new museum exhibit on Werowocomoco at the Gloucester County Visitor Center. Housed in the historic Colonial Courthouse in downtown Gloucester, Va., the visitor center is a 20-minute drive from the banks of the York River and Werowocomoco. Staff at the trail were pleased to work with Gloucester County to bring Werowocomoco to life in this exciting exhibit.

Sultana Education Foundation

After the COVID epidemic hit, a premier trail partner—Sultana Education Foundation—successfully pivoted to developing equivalent virtual programming through their Virtual Classroom website, as well as hosting socially distant paddling trips for students, youth groups, and the public.

Top photo: The pier at the Zimmerman Center. (NPS)

Native Stories in Native Places



Powhatan depicted on an insert of Captain John Smith's 1612 map. (NPS)



VIMS scientists survey the living shoreline at Werowocomoco on Oct. 26, 2020. (Cheyenne Sherwin, Chesapeake Trail)

Werowocomoco: "A Place of Leadership"

The year 2020 was one of forward-thinking progress and accomplishment for Werowocomoco. The first cohort of tribal youth completed the six-month **Werowocomoco Ancestral Lands Corps Individual Placement Program** (see pg. 2), and a **Teacher Ranger Teacher** devoted her summer to developing lesson plans and curricula for fourth-grade students who will one day visit this historical site (see pg. 3). For more accomplishments, see below:

🌊 Over the summer, planning contractor Elizabeth Clarke, along with NPS staff, completed their careful, ongoing effort with **Virginia tribal nations** to map out the future of Werowocomoco. Topics of conversation focused on the visitor experience and safety, preservation, and education issues. With the **Archeological Overview and Assessment** complete, the trail continues to look forward to hearing input from tribal partners, particularly their recommendations for research questions and continued tribal engagement.

🌊 In the fall, Ancestral Lands interns and NPS staff teamed up with scientists from the Shoreline Studies Program at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) to evaluate the progress of the **living shoreline protection project** that VIMS designed and built at Werowocomoco in 2016. The team found that the living shoreline is thriving, due in large part to the growth of marsh grasses that were planted in 2016. According to a report from VIMS, the living shoreline at Werowocomoco has "created a diverse coastal habitat capable of supporting aquatic, terrestrial, and avian fauna and affords shore and archeological resource protection from storms and sea-level rise."

Top graphic: For hundreds of years before Europeans first came there, Werowocomoco was an important town whose name means "place of leadership." (NPS)

Native Stories in Native Places



Replicas of Virginian Algonquian homes at Jamestown Settlement give a good idea of what homes would have looked like at Werowocomoco 400 years ago. (Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation)

Later in the fall, professional surveyors headed to Werowocomoco to install **four new National Geodetic Survey benchmark monuments**, or survey markers, across the 264-acre National Park Service property. Benchmark monuments, sometimes called datum points, are small, permanent markers placed into the ground to create horizontal and vertical reference points for projects requiring accurate coordinates: property boundaries, construction surveys, floodplain maps, and, in this case, archeological research.

Five datum points were first installed at Werowocomoco in the early 2000s to assist archeologists in creating a grid they could use to locate archeological units, features, and artifacts. The surveyors tied in the five existing locations with the four new markers, so that all nine are now connected to the **National Geodetic Survey (NGS) locational system**, part of NOAA's National Ocean Service. This allows archeologists to have complete spatial control of archeological testing.

NPS has determined that a desirable next step for archeological investigation at Werowocomoco is for trail staff to undertake a **geophysical survey** and work alongside experts from the regional office to determine what the geophysical survey would accomplish. The recently installed survey markers will be used by NPS staff and contractors to tie in the location information with the proposed geophysical testing and to set the stage for future archeological research.

To stay informed of trail happenings, email us at cajo_info@nps.gov to sign up for our newsletter.

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Visitor Contact Stations

- Susquehanna River:
Zimmerman Center for Heritage
- Chester River:
Sultana Education Foundation
- York River:
Gloucester County Visitor Center
- James River:
Jamestown Visitor Center

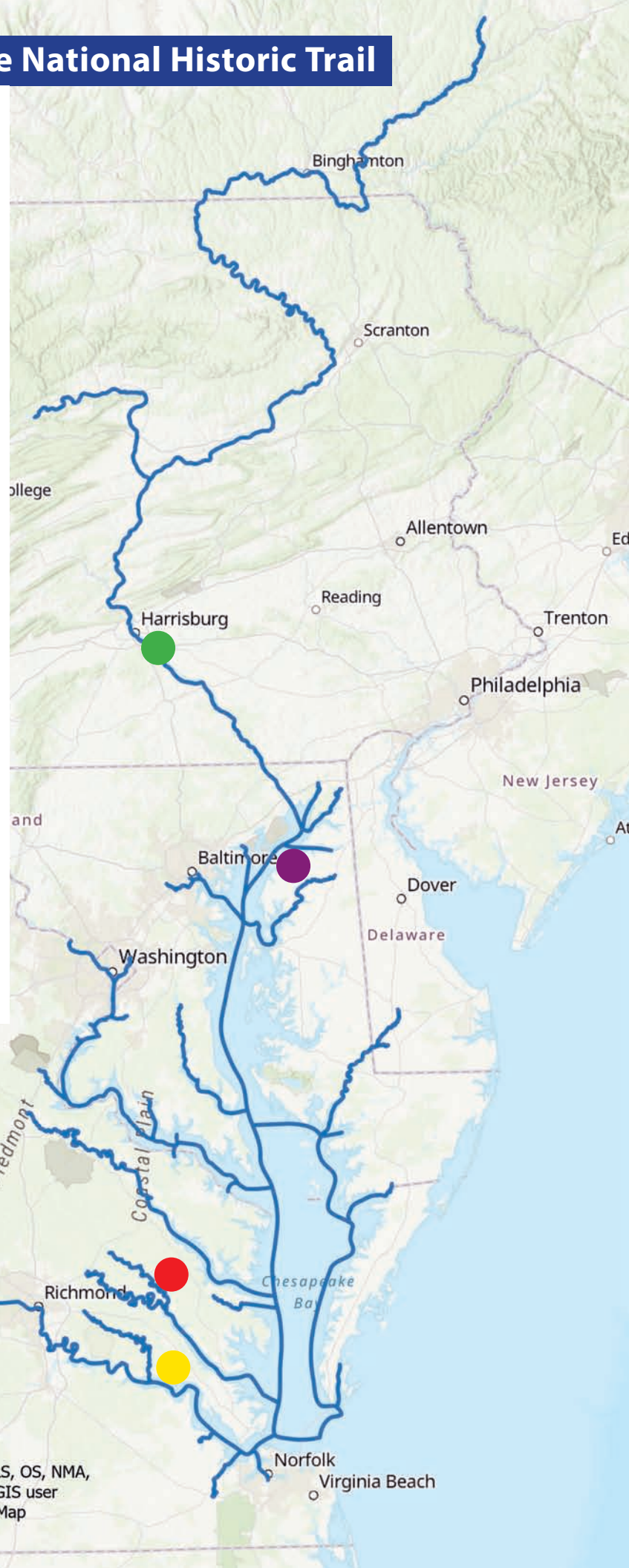
In partnership with the



For information:

www.nps.gov/cajo

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