

# Table of Contents

## **Abstract**

## **Executive Summary i**

## **Section 1: Purpose and Need for Action 1**

Purpose of the Special Resource Study 1

Need for the Special Resource Study 1

Study Process 2

## **Section 2: National Significance of the Chesapeake Bay 5**

Introduction 5

The Bay's National Significance 5

Recognition of the Significance of the Chesapeake Bay 10

Resources and Themes of the Chesapeake Bay 12

## **Section 3: Analysis of Opportunities 16**

Introduction 16

Gap Analysis 16

Initial Concepts 25

Public Evaluation of Initial Concepts 26

## **Section 4: Conceptual Alternatives 29**

Introduction 29

Alternative A: Today's Programs – No New Initiatives 31

Alternative B: An Enhanced Chesapeake Bay Gateways network– a Permanent Watershed-wide System of Special Places for Experiencing the Chesapeake 34

Alternative C: Chesapeake Bay Estuary National Park – Conserving and Exploring the Bay's Waters 40

Alternative D: A Chesapeake Bay National Reserve – Protecting the Bay's Maritime and Rural Heritage 45

Alternative E: Chesapeake Bay Watershed National Ecological & Cultural Preserve – A Living Example for the Bay and the Nation 50

Comparing Alternatives and their Origins 56

Public Comments 61

Selection of Preferred Alternative 63

The NPS-Preferred Alternative 65

## **Section 5: Affected Environment 69**

Natural Environment 69

Cultural Environment 76

Socioeconomic Environment 85

## **Section 6: Environmental Consequences 93**

Introduction 93

Methodology for Assessing Impacts 93

Impact Analysis: Natural Environment 95

Impact analysis: Cultural Environment 110

Impact Analysis: Socioeconomic Environment 115

Cumulative Impacts 128

Irreversible and Irrecoverable Commitment of Resources 131

Impairment to Park Resources 131

## **Section 7: Environmentally Preferred Alternative 136**

Methodology 137

Analysis 138

Environmentally-Preferred Alternative 139

## **Section 8: Consultation and Coordination 140**

Introduction 140

Project Scoping 141

Public Review of the Draft SRS/EIS 142

Briefings and Consultations 148

Compliance with Laws and Regulations 151

List of Recipients of the Draft and Final Report 153

List of Preparers and Planning Team 155

## **Section 9: References 156**

Bibliography 156

## **Appendices**

**Appendix A: Sub-Themes Associated with the Chesapeake Bay 159**

**Appendix B: Comments from Federal, State and Local Government Agencies and Nongovernmental Organizations 161**

**Appendix C: Suggested Places Based on Public and Agency Comments 222**

## **List of Figures**

**Figure 1-1: The Chesapeake Bay Watershed and the Special Resource Study Area of Focus 3**

**Figure 3-1: The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network Sites by Type of Institution 20**

**Figure 3-2: Number of Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network Sites with Key Resource Types 21**

**Figure 3-3: Representation of Interpretive Themes in the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network 21**

**Figure 5-1: The Chesapeake Bay Watershed 69**

**Figure 5-2: Physiographic Provinces of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed 72**

**Figure 5-3: Principal NO<sub>x</sub> Airshed for the Chesapeake Bay 75**

**Figure 5-4: The Chesapeake Bay Regional Context 85**

## **List of Tables**

**Table 4-1: Comparison of Alternatives 57**

**Table 5-1: Partial List of Federally-Listed Threatened and Endangered Species in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed 74**

**Table 5-2: Population Estimates and Projections for Portions of States in the Chesapeake Bay Drainage Basin 87**

**Table 5-3: Urban Sprawl in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed 88**

**Table 5-4: Visits to National Park Units in the Chesapeake Bay Area 91**

**Table 5-5: Visits to Major Attractions by State 91**

**Table 5-6: Visits to Other Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network Sites 92**

**Table 6-1: Impacts by Alternative 132**