

CBGN Working Group Minutes – March 9, 2005

Joseph Macknis Memorial Conference Room, Chesapeake Bay Restoration Center
Chesapeake Bay Program Office, 410 Severn Avenue, Annapolis MD 21403

Participating:

Lee Epstein, Lisa Gutierrez, Marci Ross, Elizabeth Hughes, Robert Pickett, Robert Carter, Bob Munson, Lynn Bostain, Melanie Teems, Chris Conner, John Davy, Bob Campbell, Jonathan Doherty, Rod Torrez, Cheryl Branagan, Catherine Mueller

The meeting convened at 10:00 AM.

The Working Group welcomed Chris Connor, new representative of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Chris is also the Director of Communications for the Bay Program Office and is based in Annapolis. MD. Welcome Chris!

Chris provided an overview of the “Chesapeake Club” ad campaign, a new Chesapeake Bay Program initiative to involve citizens in helping conserve the Bay through reducing use of lawn fertilizers.

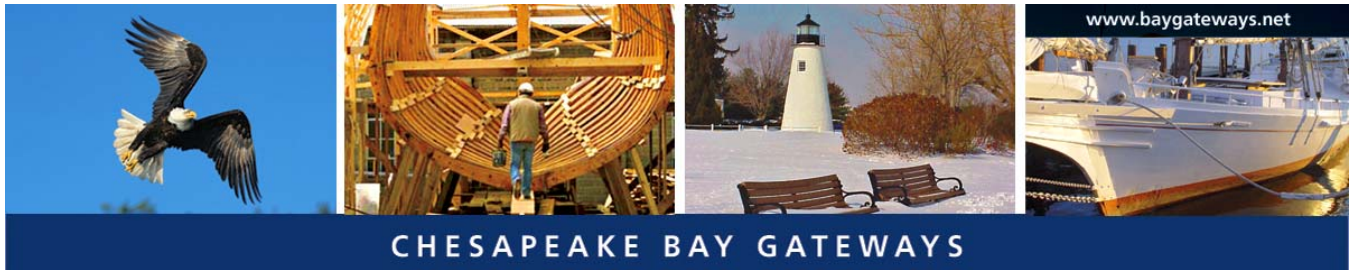
Pending Gateway Nominations:

St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church: The Working Group acknowledged St. Andrews Church as a viable cultural and historical resource in the Chesapeake Bay region. They felt the church’s unique architectural features and important role in the developmental history of the area make it an intriguing attraction. Working Group members appreciated the interest and willingness to work toward accommodating visitors at the site and adding interpretive elements to aid in conveying the site’s history. However, members concluded that since the main site mission is to manage an active church, visitor services and interpretation would always be a subordinate function. This runs counter to the objectives of the Gateways Network and the site designation criteria. Furthermore, members agreed that even though the church is representative of a few of the Network’s sub-themes, the site’s over-all connectivity to the Chesapeake Bay is too indistinct and, therefore, would not be intuitive for visitors. Members concluded that the site is better suited for inclusion on a heritage trail or other designated route, perhaps through the Maryland Heritage Areas program or other programs. Members recommended against designation.



your Chesapeake connection

National Park Service 410 Severn Avenue Suite 109 Annapolis MD 21403 1-800 YOUR BAY (968 7229)



The Working Group also tabled for the time being a future, separate discussion point – under what circumstances would it be appropriate for a religious cultural site to become a Gateways site?

Smithsonian Environmental Research Center: The Working Group acknowledged SERC’s commitment to enhancing visitor orientation and interpretive programs and applauded efforts to date. The development of a visitor services task force and new interactive orientation station along with plans to improve directional on-site signage on-site, expand docent training and eventually extend hours to include weekends were all duly noted by the Working Group. Ultimately, members recommended postponing designation until further progress is made towards full implementation of these efforts to welcome and orient visitors. The suggested SERC contact CBGN as soon as pending significant improvements are completed rather than waiting for the next formal nomination cycle.

Dogwood Harbor: Working Group members expressed overwhelming support in designating Dogwood Harbor as a Gateway site. They recognized the harbor’s significance as an authentic and rich Bay-related resource. The harbor offers a unique opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in the culture and working lifestyles of Tilghman Island watermen, and the boat tours originating from the site provide a true Chesapeake Bay experience. In planning further enhancements to the site, the Working Group strongly encouraged adding some interpretive elements and basic visitor facilities and to incorporate “green” construction standards in future structural improvements.

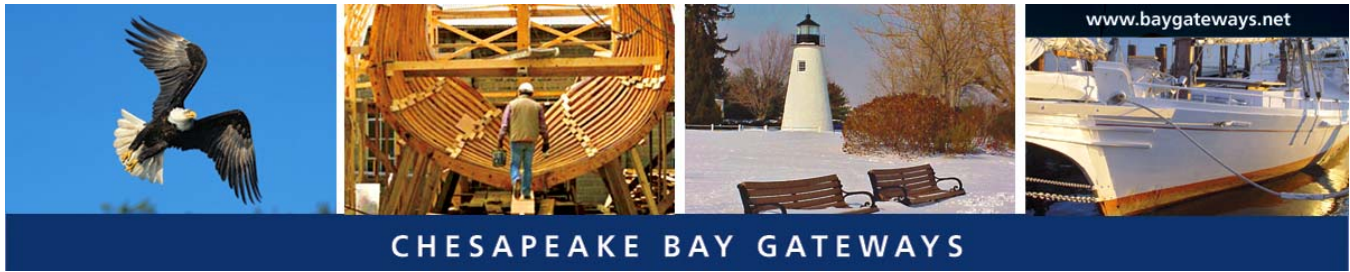
Headwaters River Trails Partnership: The Working Group viewed the proposal as nominating a set or system of water trails for the upper Susquehanna River – the Headwaters River Trails. These water trails would ultimately consist of a route along the mainstem of the Susquehanna from the Pennsylvania/New York border to Cooperstown, and three tributary segments along the Unadilla, the Chenango and the Tioghnioaga. While all segments are important, development of the segment along the mainstem would make for a significant milestone, completing a continuous series of linked water trails from Cooperstown to the Chesapeake Bay.

The Working Group felt that the coordinating function proposed for the Headwaters River Trails Partnership is key to the designation of the Headwaters River Trails as a developing water trail. Creation of this partnership was viewed as a necessary step prior to final designation and signing of an MOU with the National Park Service. Among the coordinating functions Working Group members anticipated the Partnership will need to undertake is to advise the Gateways Network of



your Chesapeake connection

National Park Service 410 Severn Avenue Suite 109 Annapolis MD 21403 1-800 YOUR BAY (968 7229)



clear priorities regarding overall water trail development and all individual routes, as well as all Gateways grant proposals.

Working Group members also noted that as water trails have developed along the mainstem and the West Branch, the Gateways Network and the individual trail segment managers have placed a strong emphasis on creating consistency and continuity in key products for trail users, including maps and guides and access point orientation signage. It will be important to continue these consistent design approaches in the Susquehanna headwaters.

Lawrence Lewis Jr. County Park: Working Group members felt that this unique site will offer not only wildlife viewing, but serve as an access point on the James River Water Trail, as well as a connection along the Virginia Capital Trail. The Working Group also recognized that the site helps fill a gap in the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network as the only designated site in Charles City County. The site has great potential to reach a diverse audience of visitors, from birders to picnickers to pleasure boaters and anglers. The Working Group recommended designation.

Rock Creek Park Working Group members expressed overwhelming support in designating Rock Creek Park as a Gateway. Rock Creek Park presents outstanding opportunities to reach a large, diverse audience of visitors in the heart of the nation's capitol and to interpret how they are connected to the Chesapeake Bay.

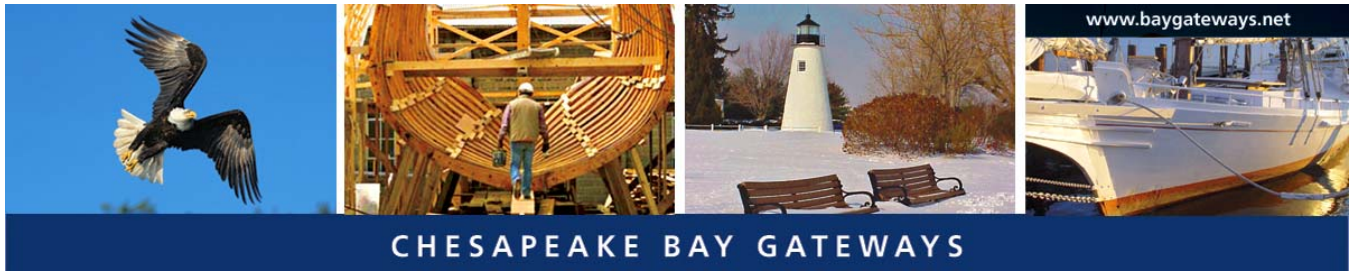
Georgetown Waterfront Park: Working Group members noted that Georgetown Waterfront Park has the potential to fulfill all the Gateways criteria once it is fully developed as a site, and will be a welcome attraction to the waterfront. In fact, Working Group members were generally enthusiastic about the site's potential as a Gateway once current development plans are implemented. However, due to the present state of development and public access, as well as the potential disruption as major construction commences, Working Group members felt that the park does not yet stand alone as a site that meets the full criteria of Network membership. The Working Group recommended reconsideration of the nomination once development plans are more fully accomplished.

Although Georgetown Waterfront Park itself does not presently meet criteria for independent designation as a Gateway, the Working Group recognized that it is currently a unit of Rock Creek Park. As a part of Rock Creek Park, Georgetown Waterfront will be eligible for many of the benefits of Gateways membership this year.



your Chesapeake connection

National Park Service 410 Severn Avenue Suite 109 Annapolis MD 21403 1-800 YOUR BAY (968 7229)



Washington's Ferry Farm: The Working Group recognized that Washington's Ferry Farm offers opportunities to introduce visitors to both cultural and natural bay-related themes; the location is notable not only for its history but also for its visual appeal and connection to the Rappahannock River. Working Group members were pleased to see the site involved in partnerships with other sites in the area, and encouraged the strong relationship being built with Friends of the Rappahannock and the Rappahannock River Water Trail. The Working Group recommended designation.

Living Classrooms Fleet of Historic Working Watercraft: Working Group members noted that the Living Classrooms Fleet of Historic Working Watercraft serves a worthy role in school education. However, because access to the craft by the general public is extremely limited throughout the year, Working Group members felt that the fleet does not fully meet the criteria for designation as a Gateway. In making their recommendation against designation, the Working Group considered each craft separately, and though two ships do show a higher degree of access, it was not to the degree expected for a designated site.

Shenandoah River State Park: Members of the Working Group felt that Shenandoah River State Park presents an outstanding opportunity to draw connections between visitors and the Chesapeake Bay through high-quality, upper-watershed experiences. The compelling scenery, trails, river access and other recreational resources are inviting to visitors, and the planned visitor center offers great potential for addressing bay watershed themes. While Working Group members were fully confident the park has community support for a Gateway designation, it must be documented; designation was recommended pending receipt of necessary support letters.

Jones Falls Trail: Working Group members felt the Jones Falls Trail presents an opportunity to create a physical connection between thousands of people and the Bay along the Jones Falls Watershed. They cautioned, however, that the challenge for the trail as a Gateway will be to ensure that trail users are presented with clear interpretation and orientation to make the conceptual links to the bay, especially in urban areas where development has overtaken the stream. They noted that only the established portions of the trail should appear on the Gateways Network website, and new sections could be added as later phases are completed. The Working Group recommended designation.

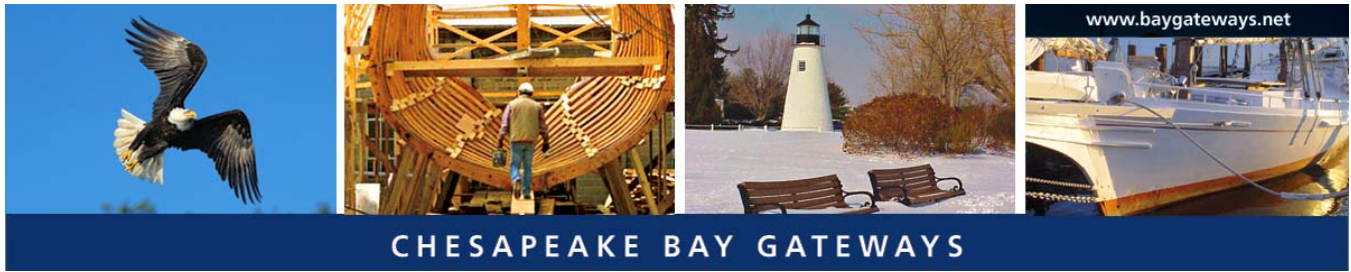
Program Management Actions:

Jonathan Doherty discussed planned program management actions to address various elements of Gateways Network management, including grant program administration, grant monitoring and



your Chesapeake connection

National Park Service 410 Severn Avenue Suite 109 Annapolis MD 21403 1-800 YOUR BAY (968 7229)



strategic planning. Working Group members agreed to the need to move up the thematic and geographic gap analysis and strategic planning initiatives to May and June.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held as the Gateways Conference; there will not be a formal April meeting.

The **next meeting will be on** May 11, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. in the Fish Shack, Annapolis, MD.

Adjournment



your Chesapeake connection

National Park Service 410 Severn Avenue Suite 109 Annapolis MD 21403 1-800 YOUR BAY (968 7229)