



**Minutes**  
**Gateways Network Working Group Meeting and Conference Call**  
***Chesapeake Bay Program Office***  
**CBPO Third Floor Conference Room**  
**March 19, 2004**

**Attending:**

Lisa Gutierrez, Melanie Teems, Elizabeth Hughes, Maria Vonderheid, Bob Campbell, Jonathan Doherty, Skip Meehan, Cheryl Branagan, Michael Land, Catherine Mueller. Dan Martin, Robert Pickett, Marian Hrubovcak, Robert Carter, John Davy, Lynn Bostain via telephone.

The meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

**Review of Pending Gateway Nominations:**

Members discussed the most efficient way to proceed given the need to evaluate 30 pending nominations. There was consensus that many of the NPS reviewers' recommendations were clearly appropriate for the reasons stated on the review sheets. Therefore a number of nominations were accepted or rejected by acclamation.

Members discussed the relatively high percentage of rejected nominations and acknowledged that in part many of the most appropriate resource sites have already joined the Network. It was noted that as the group has gained experience in overseeing the growth of the Network, the collective understanding of what is appropriate has become more rigorous. The Working Group continues to be disciplined about maintaining open-mindedness about the future of the Network, but also strives to be meticulous about building from a solid core, being true to the Network's vision, and mindful of management limitations. Members agreed this sometimes results in deferring on a good idea until we have the capacity to embrace it.

Discussion then proceeded on a number of the pending nominations allowing the Working Group to find consensus on the dispensation and each of the members to fully understand the rationale. Key points of those discussions follow:

***Galesville Heritage Society:*** Some hesitations were expressed regarding the limited resource base, hours of operation and parking. However, it was noted that while the resource base is limited it is very rich, and the hours of operation while limited are dependable. The Galesville Heritage Society is immersed in strategic planning and demonstrates great resolve in their aspirations for the site. The Society has acquired an adjacent parking area and has money to expand their parking lot by year's end, and they have dedicated funding to create outdoor

exhibits to serve visitors off hours. ***The Working Group agreed to designate the Galesville Heritage Society Museum as a Gateway site.***

***Susquehanna River Hills Nature Preserves:*** It was noted that as one of the first sites nominated beyond the fall line, the Working Group has somewhat limited context for evaluating this nomination. Gateways designation criteria require that sites be “located in close proximity to the Bay, its tidal tributaries, or major tributaries in the upper watershed.” As a collective nomination this assemblage of preserves has problems: (a) some of these preserves are several miles removed from the Susquehanna River, with the Chesapeake connection not being apparent; (b) there are few if any resources to help a visitor make that connection—none of the preserves has any on-site interpretation, and the Lancaster County Conservancy has no true interpretive staff; (c) given that this is a single nomination of 7 separately named preserves it is difficult to make a qualitative assessment of individual preserves.

Working Group and Network members familiar with these preserves feel that some, but not all, of these preserves might ultimately fit Gateway designation criteria. It was felt that the Conservancy, with a fuller understanding of Network goals, should be challenged to make a more judicious nomination of the most appropriate preserve(s). ***The Working Group agreed they could not designate the Susquehanna River Hills Nature Preserves based on the nomination submitted.*** However, the Working Group would propose to follow-up with the Conservancy to explore a resubmission for any of the individual preserves that might be appropriate.

*Additional Discussion Note:* To clarify thinking about the appropriate qualifications for sites in the upper watershed, and to be better prepared for this site consultation, the Working Group should explore further discussions with key partners in Pennsylvania to identify high priority candidate sites in the upper watershed in that state – including other potential sites in the immediate vicinity of these preserves.

***Fells Point National Register Historic District:*** Ultimately, the ***Working Group agreed to accept this nomination for a Gateway*** site embracing the entire historic district. It was noted that in many ways, this district is almost the prototypical example for a district that meets the new criteria adopted in 2003.

The nomination prompted discussion of two new considerations in applying the historic district criteria and in administering the benefits of designation.

1. Gateways within a Gateway: The group’s decision points toward a policy where a historic district might be designated as a Gateway, despite the presence of another Gateway existing within it – when there is a fundamental aspect of the district’s Bay-related themes that cannot be interpreted or presented through the existing site. However, the group recognized the potential confusion that could be created by multiple Gateway designations within a district; should such future nominations follow, they should be evaluated carefully for potential overlap or confusion that may result.
2. Applicability of Gateways Grants: In the case of a historic district, only projects that advance the experience of the overall district would be considered eligible. In other words, projects that focus solely or primarily on one site within a district would not be eligible.

***Elizabeth River Project:*** Members noted the valuable work of the Elizabeth River Project. However, members felt at this time the nomination did not meet one key characteristic of a Gateway site – that it is either a significant historic, cultural, natural or recreational Bay-related resource. Working Group members did not perceive the center as natural resource, historic resource or cultural museum in the traditional sense. After careful review, Working Group members concluded the Center truly functioned as an effective environmental education resource center, a category not currently eligible for designation as a Gateway. ***The Working Group they could not designate the Elizabeth River Project as a Gateway site***, but expressed an interest in exploring opportunities for working with the Elizabeth River Project.

***Norfolk Botanical Garden:*** While clearly an exceptional and enormously popular site, to be an appropriate Chesapeake Bay Gateway, a Bay connection must be readily apparent to the visiting public. With all the wonderful experience that is available at the Norfolk Botanical Garden, the Bay component is too deeply embedded to be apparent to the visiting public. This situation closely parallels the circumstance of the National Aquarium in Baltimore—an impressive attraction with state-of-the art interpretation that lacked a commitment to the Chesapeake story when first nominated several years ago. Now several years later, that story has emerged, and the Chesapeake connection is proudly made and expanding for Aquarium visitors. Several aspects of the Norfolk Botanical Garden hold promise for establishing an important and apparent Bay connection with improved interpretation, exhibits and programming. Most notable is the Virginia Native Plant Garden, which could be an important place to interpret the importance of conservation landscaping principles (use of native species, control of invasive plants, integrated pest management, water-wise landscaping, etc.) that protect local water quality and aid the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. While ***the Working Group agreed they could not designate the Norfolk Botanical Garden at the present time***, members recognized the site’s potential and expressed an interest in working with key staff at the Botanical Garden to explore the potential for an expanded Chesapeake focus in the future.

***Smithsonian Environmental Research Center:*** Working Group members recognized that the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center is a significant venue for scientific research that also encompasses an important natural area on the western shore. Moreover, the Smithsonian also provides educational programs for regularly scheduled groups. The value of these programs is clear and important.

At the same time, Gateways serve as the primary places where members of the general public are directed to access, experience, enjoy and learn about Bay-related resources. This requires a certain level of accessibility and an orientation to the general visiting public. Working Group members were concerned that the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center did not meet these criteria. Given the center’s primary role as a research site and secondary role in environmental education, members felt the current emphasis on visitor services to be too limited to function as an effective Gateway. While not all of these are mandatory, the combined lack of a visitor orientation facility and associated staff, limited visitor opportunities, and weekend closures make it difficult for the center to serve effectively as a Gateway site at this time. ***The Working Group agreed they could not designate SERC at the present time.***

***Tudor Hall:*** Working Group members recognized Tudor Hall as an important historic resource in St. Mary's County and applauded efforts to restore the mansion and associated gardens. Members also understood that Leonardtown's history is inextricably linked to the Chesapeake Bay. However, the Working Group determined that Tudor Hall does not meet key Gateway site designation criteria. Members felt that the ability of Tudor Hall to convey a strong and present thematic connection to the Chesapeake is somewhat limited. In part, this arises from the loss of the plantation context for the house, due to adjacent development. This constrains the ability to convey to visitors the link between a large plantation and the Bay. Moreover, interpretation is more focused on the house, its residents and furnishings, than the broader thematic connections to Chesapeake resources. Ultimately, the Working Group felt they ***could not designate Tudor Hall*** as a Gateway at this time.

***LeGrange Plantation:*** The Working Group felt the LaGrange Plantation does not currently meet Gateway site designation criteria. The principal factors influencing the group's decision involve the nature of the site's resources and the potential for Bay-related interpretation. Working Group members recognized that the cultural resources of the LaGrange Plantation are noteworthy. At the same time, members expressed concern that the fragmentation and subsequent development of much of the original plantation landscape make it substantially more difficult for visitors to relate existing resources, such as the Meredith House, to Chesapeake themes. In addition, members felt the interpretive connections to the Chesapeake presented by the Neild Museum and other resources would need to be more clearly drawn for the site to function as a Gateway. Accordingly, the ***Working Group agreed to reject the nomination.***

Working Group members understand the Historical Society has received a Maryland Heritage Areas Authority grant for developing a comprehensive plan<sup>1</sup>. As part of the visioning process associated with the grant, members recognized the Society could explore how Chesapeake themes might be addressed. The development and implementation of this plan could well point to a way for the LaGrange Plantation to be designated as a Gateway in the future.

***Trap Pond State Park:*** Working Group members felt the park's geographic location and topography make it fundamentally difficult for visitors to associate the park with the Chesapeake Bay. As a natural and recreational resource, being off of any major Bay tributary makes the intuitive connection much harder for visitors to make. In this case, the park is a couple of streams removed from an Eastern Shore tributary to the Bay. Ultimately, the Working Group determined the park's Chesapeake resource and interpretive connections were too limited for Gateway designation, despite the park's inherent recreational value for visitors. ***The Working Group agreed to reject the nomination.***

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<sup>1</sup> Per Elizabeth Hughes follow-up email: As part of this project, the consultant will:

1. facilitate visioning sessions with Historical Society officers and members to determine the appropriateness of existing collections and the need for new collections;
2. evaluate the specific storage and exhibit space required by each type of existing collection and potential new collections;
3. develop a conceptual design for a new museum building;
4. develop a site plan in consultation with the MHT Easement Administrator illustrating new and existing buildings on the property, various collection storage and exhibit locations, vehicle and pedestrian traffic patterns, and parking areas.

The Working Group also suggested there may well be other Delaware sites that might present a better connection to the bay and its watershed.

### **Review of Pending Water Trail Nominations:**

Some particular discussion focused on a couple of water trail nominations that include components that would “connect” ports at great distance via trails within the main stem of the Chesapeake Bay. These were cause for concern for the Working Group because they are understood conceptually to be more like “connecting routes” for power or sailing craft than “water trails” for paddling. The Group’s consensus was that we would have to give further deliberation to an appropriate niche that such connecting routes might occupy in the Gateways Network and understand what value the Gateways Network can reasonably offer such cruising routes. Furthermore, we have to be responsible as we continue to develop the Network and understand our management limitations. The result is that sometimes we are not yet ready for certain initiatives.

***Stories of the Chesapeake Bay Water Trail:*** While a water trail or trails in this region of the Maryland eastern shore are clearly desirable, the Working Group felt there were a number of significant issues related to this nomination.

The nomination covers an enormous geography and alludes to “one central route in the Chesapeake Bay with smaller loop trails extending into smaller bays and port towns.” The group viewed this as in fact proposing two discreet Network components: a connecting route and a water trail or trails.

The component of the nomination that is on the main stem of the Chesapeake Bay poses some particular concerns. If intended as a paddling route, there was concern that it could not be endorsed by either the Gateways Network or the State of Maryland because of safety concerns. If intended as a “connecting route” for motorized or sail boats, then it would need to be conceptualized and nominated as such. If the latter, the Working Group felt it would be very important to have further consultation with the Working Group as this category is still unprecedented in the Gateways Network. The Working Group would have to first make a determination about an appropriate niche that such connecting routes might occupy in the Gateways Network and assess how such components can be organized and sustained throughout the Bay area. In short, members felt additional consideration is necessary prior to taking such as step.

Working Group members felt there clearly are appropriate water trail(s) that can be developed within this geographic area, but that the practicality (accessibility, safety, public and stakeholder support, etc.) has not been sufficiently demonstrated in this nomination. The Working Group cautions that consultation with state water trail program managers (in this case within Maryland Department of Natural Resources) is a critical first step. Subsequent to these steps, the Working Group felt it would welcome future nominations specifying more discreet attainable paddling routes.

Working Group members also felt the proposed nomenclature poses issues. So broadly titled, it would cause confusion for the Gateways visiting public. Experience has demonstrated that a

more discreet geographically linked name offers better clarity for marketing the trail. When nomination(s) are resubmitted, strong consideration should be given to renaming the trail or independent trails.

Lastly, the Working Group felt the nomination package itself gave the impression of being hastily assembled. This raised a concern – not over the professionalism of the applicant – but over the organization’s capacity for water trail management, given its many regional responsibilities. Members suggested it may be helpful for Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc. to consult with a couple of the regional heritage area managers in Pennsylvania that have undertaken the management of water trails to benefit from those acquired experiences.

While the Working Group ***agreed to reject the nomination in its current form***, members recognized the potential for water trail(s) in this geographic area and wished to work with Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc. to pursue more appropriate nomination(s).

***Virginia Eastern Shore Water Trails:*** The Working Group considered that this nomination was in fact proposing two discreet Network components: a connecting route and a water trail or trails. The Working Group was enthusiastic about adding water trail(s) within this geographic area to the Network. The applicant, being very familiar with the Network’s vision for water trails is building a strong, interested regional coalition. The smaller loop trails, such as the one proposed for Saxis Wildlife Management Area, have many precedents within the Network and would be welcome additions. ***The Working Group agreed to accept the “water trail” nomination with only a minor caveat.***

The proposed nomenclature may pose some issue. So broadly titled it might cause confusion for the Gateways visiting public. Experience has demonstrated that a more discreet geographically linked name offers better clarity for marketing the trail. Especially if as envisioned the trail is in fact a number of independent trails rather than one “continuous” trail the Working Group would encourage the applicant to consider how to develop an effective naming scheme for the designated water trail(s).

The component of the nomination that is a cruising route for motorized or sail boats on the main stem of the Chesapeake Bay posed particular concerns. ***The Working Group agreed that this “connecting route” component should be deferred*** pending further consultation with regional experts. The Working Group must first make a determination about an appropriate niche that such connecting routes might occupy in the Gateways Network and assess how such components can be organized and sustained throughout the Bay area. Subsequent to a determination that the Working Group is prepared to venture into such work, we could pursue further consultations with this applicant on such a nomination.

## Final Dispensation:

Nominated Gateway	Location	State	Region	Decision
<b>Nominated Sites</b>				
Galesville Heritage Society	Galesville	MD	Lower Western Shore Northern Eastern	Yes
Sassafras NRMA	Kennedyville	MD	Shore Northern Eastern	Yes
Turner's Creek	Kennedyville	MD	Shore Northern Eastern	Yes
Geddes-Piper House	Chestertown	MD	Shore	Yes
Bladensburg Waterfront Park	Bladensburg	MD	Potomac	Yes
Dundee and Salt Peters Creek County Park	N. of Baltimore	MD	Upper Western Shore	Yes
National Aquarium	Baltimore Lancaster	MD	Upper Western Shore	Yes
Susquehanna River Hills Nature Preserves	County	PA	Susquehanna	No
Fells Point National Register Historic District	Baltimore	MD	Upper Western Shore	Yes
Elizabeth River Project	Norfolk	VA	James River	No
Norfolk Botanical Garden	Norfolk	VA	James River	No
Breezy Point Beach & Campground	Chesapeake Beach	MD	Lower Western Shore	No
Smithsonian Environmental Research Center	Edgewater	MD	Lower Western Shore	No
Tudor Hall	Leonardtown	MD	Lower Western Shore	No
Trap Pond State Park	Laurel	DE	Middle Eastern Shore	No
LaGrange Plantation	Cambridge	MD	Middle Eastern Shore	No
Pocomoke River Exploratory	Pocomoke City	MD	Middle Eastern Shore Northern Eastern	No
Historic Christ Church	Kent Island	MD	Shore Northern Eastern	No
The Mainstay	Rock Hall	MD	Shore Northern Eastern	No
The Prince Theatre	Chestertown	MD	Shore	No
<b>Nominated RIC</b>				
BACVA Visitor Center	Baltimore	MD	Upper Western Shore	Yes
<b>Nominated Connecting Routes (Water Trails)</b>				
Virginia Eastern Shore Water Trails	VA	VA	James River	Yes for loop trails; no for cruising route
Occoquan Water Trail	N.VA	VA	Potomac	Yes
Juniata River Water Trail	PA	PA	Susquehanna	Yes
Swatera Creek Water Trail	Lebanon, PA	PA	Susquehanna	Yes
Stories of the Chesapeake Bay Water Trail	MD	MD	Upper Eastern Shore	No
Susquehanna River Trail	Owego	PA	Susquehanna	No
<b>Requested Amendments to existing site designation</b>				
St. Clement's Island (amendment)	Western MD	MD	Lower Western Shore	Yes
Mount Calvert (amendment)	Western MD	MD	Lower Western Shore	Yes

The meeting was adjourned just about 12:05 p.m. Having neglected to review the February 10<sup>th</sup> minutes, that business will be postponed until the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

### **2004 Meeting Schedule**

Tuesday, April 13 – Fish Shack -  
Cancelled

Wednesday, May 19 –

Tuesday, June \_\_ – Fish Shack

Wednesday, July 7 – Fish Shack

August 4 – Fish Shack

Wednesday, September 8 – Fish Shack

Tuesday, October 12 – Fish Shack

Tuesday, November 9 – Fish Shack

Wednesday, December 1 – Fish Shack