



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### Chesapeake Bay Office

Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network  
Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail  
Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail  
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 314  
Annapolis, MD 21403

September 18, 2014

Mr. Randy Steffey  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Norfolk District  
803 Front Street  
Norfolk, Virginia 23510-1096

Re: Section 106 -- Dominion Virginia Power's Surry - Skiffes Creek - Whealton Project

Dear Mr. Steffey:

Thank you for your recent email regarding additional information on the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. With this letter and attachments we are providing information that should assist you in assessing affects of Dominion Virginia Power's Surry - Skiffes Creek - Whealton Project on the trail. We provided a substantial portion of this information to you in prior correspondence, but are supplementing it here with additional points and graphic materials.

1. The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (Captain John Smith Trail) commemorates Smith's voyages of exploration of the Chesapeake in 1607-1609, shares knowledge of the American Indian societies and cultures he interacted with during these journeys, and interprets the past and present natural history of the Chesapeake Bay. Congress designated the trail in 2006 through an amendment to Section 5(a) of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1244(a)); it is the first nationally designated water trail under the Act. The trail route is found throughout the portions of the tidal Chesapeake explored by Smith, including the James and Chickahominy rivers; the trail was further extended by the Secretary of the Interior in May 2012. (*See attachment A (John Smith Voyage Routes) and attachment B (Route of Captain John Smith Trail)*)
2. The National Trails Systems Act identifies several elements of a national historic or scenic trail, which combine to determine the feasibility and desirability of designation of such trails. These elements include characteristics of nationally significant, well-preserved properties that can contribute or connect to the trail, which should be utilized for scenic, historic, natural, cultural or developmental purposes. Prior to establishment of the Captain John Smith Trail by Congress in December 2006, the trail route was determined by the National Park System Advisory Board in March 2006 to be nationally significant. (<http://www.smithtrail.net/about-the-trail/legislation-and-purpose/>)

While the trail route is not formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), it is treated by the National Park Service and the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer as eligible for listing on the NRHP and as nationally significant. The trail clearly meets National Register criteria A, B and D. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the

broad patterns of our history (criterion A); Smith's voyages and explorations of the Chesapeake Bay are among the most well known aspects of early colonial history that led to the formation of this nation. The trail is associated with the lives of significant persons in or past (criterion B); in addition to Smith himself, the trail is also associated with Powhatan and Pocahontas, two iconic figures in American history. The trail has yielded, and may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory (criterion D); recent and ongoing research along the trail on American Indian cultures, communities and indigenous cultural landscapes has and continues to yield significant new findings that inform knowledge of our collective history.

3. You asked whether the Captain John Smith Trail was purely commemorative in function. The answer is no. Seven years of trail planning, development and conservation activities make this clear. The National Park Service completed a *Comprehensive Management Plan* (CMP; <http://www.nps.gov/cajo/parkmgmt/planning.htm>) for the trail in 2011. The CMP states:

“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; 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.*” (emphasis added)

4. Trail management focuses on providing visitors with experiences of trail-related resources and on conserving those resources. The CMP identifies seven principle types of trail-related resources:

(1) – *John Smith voyage stops*: Locations where Smith and his crew stopped during the 1607-1609 voyages.

(2) – *Evocative landscapes*: Visible shoreline generally evocative of the seventeenth century encompassing stretches where the shoreline is relatively free from intrusion by modern development and offers visitors an opportunity to vicariously share the experience of Smith and his crew. Such shorelines are primarily composed of wetland and forest vegetation.

(3) – *Indigenous cultural landscapes*: Landscapes generally encompassing cultural and natural resources that would have likely been associated with, and supported, the historic lifestyle and settlement patterns of American Indians and that exhibited their cultural or esthetic values at the time of early European contact.

(4) – *Historic American Indian town sites*: Historic American Indian town sites including, but not limited to, those mapped in *John Smith's Chesapeake Voyages 1607 – 1609* (Rountree et al. 2007), *John Smith in the Chesapeake* (Haile 2008), and others.

(5) – *Significant seventeenth-century American Indian archaeological sites*: Sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or determined to be eligible for listing, which offer an opportunity to tell important stories of the native peoples who lived in the Chesapeake when John Smith arrived.

(6) – *Landscape features and cultural sites of significance to modern American Indian tribes:* Sites which consultation or scholarly research has documented as culturally significant to modern Chesapeake Bay tribes, having an historical connection to a 17<sup>th</sup> century tribe and in proximity to the Smith voyage route.

(7) – *Cross sites:* Twenty-five general locations in proximity to the trail where Smith’s maps indicate that he or others placed a brass cross, marking the limits of their exploration. These sites are generally known on the basis of interpretation of Smith’s maps, his journal writings, and scholarly research.

(8) – *Public access sites:* Places where the public can view Smith’s voyage routes from the land or gain physical access to the water along voyage routes for boating, fishing, swimming, or other recreational use.

Several of these resources are addressed in more detail below. Copies of two maps published in the CMP to depict some of these resources in the vicinity of the James River segment of the trail are attached (*see attachments C and D*).

5. The CMP identifies initial “high potential route segments” and “high potential historic sites” as required by the National Trails System Act (NTSA). All segments of the trail have the potential to provide important opportunities for visitors to experience the world encountered by John Smith and his crew as they explored the Chesapeake Bay. Those trail segments or sites along the trail that meet criteria for designation as “high-potential historic sites” and “high-potential route segments” offer exceptional opportunities for visitors to vicariously share the experience of John Smith and his crew. Because these sites and segments are exceptional, trail management actions would place priority on protecting their associated resources and values that are fundamental to the trail and on enhancing the opportunities which visitors have to experience those resources and values.

The tidal James River from its mouth to Richmond is identified as a high potential route segment. High potential route segments as defined in the NTSA means “those segments of a trail which would afford high quality recreation experience in a portion of the route having greater than average scenic values or affording an opportunity to vicariously share the experience of the original users of a historic route.” (*see attachments C, D and E for maps depicting high potential route segments*)

6. The trail corridor, as identified in *A Conservation Strategy for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail* (NPS 2013; <http://www.nps.gov/cajo/parkmgmt/upload/CAJO-Cons-Strat-012913-final-compr-red.pdf>), is the composite of evocative landscapes, indigenous cultural landscapes and other trail-related resources along the trail route.
7. The National Park Service, working with many local and regional partners and through a public process, completed *A Plan for the James River Segment* (<http://www.nps.gov/cajo/parkmgmt/upload/James-Concept-Plan-Final-red96dpi.pdf>) of the trail in 2011, as called for in the CMP. The segment plan identifies focus areas for enhancing and expanding visitor experiences in the 2012-2015 time period. Two focus areas are identified in the vicinity of the proposed James River power line crossing: the Jamestown/Powhatan Creek Focus Area, and the Chippokes Plantation State Park and Hog Island Wildlife Management Area Focus Area. (*see attachments F, G, H, I*).

The proposed Surry-Skiffes Creek crossing originates in and cuts through the Chippokes Plantation State Park and Hog Island Wildlife Management Area Focus Area. (This crossing is also within view of the Jamestown/Powhatan Creek Focus Area.) The James River segment plan

identifies a series of visitor experiences in the Chippokes/Hog Island focus area, including boating and wildlife viewing in an evocative landscape. The plan cites visitors launching boats, canoes and kayaks from a boat ramp below Lawnes Creek and exploring Hog Island WMA from the James River. The proposed Surry-Skiffes Creek line would cut directly through this route.

The segment plan also identifies the Jamestown and Powhatan Creek focus area (just up river from Hog Island) as a destination for sail or power boaters following the trail on longer cruising experiences. The vicinity around Hog Island, where the Surry-Skiffes Creek line is proposed is the functional entrance to Jamestown Island, one of the most significant sites along the trail.

8. Visitor experiences along a water trail are defined by the view of land and waterscapes from a river, creek or the Bay. As noted in 4(2) above, the trail CMP defines evocative landscapes as a core trail resource upon which visitor experiences depend. Evocative landscapes are “places possessing a feeling that expresses the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. This feeling results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey a landscape’s historic character.” The CMP further defines this as “visible shoreline generally evocative of the 17<sup>th</sup> century - primarily composed of forests and wetlands.” The presence of evocative landscapes is one component for identifying high potential route segments noted in 5 above.

The National Park Service performed an initial identification of the trail’s evocative landscape as viewed from the water when developing the CMP. Trail-wide maps were developed and published in the CMP. Since that time, the National Park Service has performed more detailed mapping of evocative landscapes along the trail route in several locations, including in the vicinity of the proposed crossing route. This uses GIS data to map shoreline composed of forest and wetlands visible from the trail. This analysis indicates that the vast majority of the shoreline (greater than 85%) along this portion of the trail route is composed of evocative landscapes. In July 2014 the National Park Service traveled this section of the James River on a boat to field check the GIS mapping. National Park Service staff documented on-water views of shorelines along the trail route in the vicinity of the project area and confirmed the magnitude of evocative landscapes. (*see attachment J for 2013 Evocative Landscapes Map with 2014 photo documentation.*)

9. The proposed Surry-Skiffes crossing is in the midst of an approximately fifty-one mile stretch of the James River with no overhead crossings; this constitutes a substantial viewshed resource of the John Smith Trail. In contrast to much land-based development which often has the potential for being screened from the view of visitors traveling by water, structures crossing a river, including towers in the water and powerlines, are effectively un-screenable. Moreover, along a water trail these crossings do not simply intrude on the view from a distance; overhead crossings are experienced continuously from a distance to close up to overhead. They constitute major impacts on the visitor experience.

Neither Dominion nor the USACE have provided analysis or modeling of the visual impacts of the Surry-Skiffes crossing from the national historic trail visitor perspective. Modeling of the impacts as viewed from boaters traveling to and exploring Hog Island WMA, and as viewed from cruising boaters traveling along the trail up the James River to Jamestown is necessary. This will be essential information to accurately assess the impacts this potential project could have on trail resources.

10. Resources and values important to American Indians are central to the Captain John Smith Trail. The trail and its resources provides an opportunity for helping visitors and citizens understand the long history of indigenous stewardship of the Chesapeake region prior to European contact, the early interactions with English colonists, and the values of tribes and descendent communities today. This is at the core of “instilling awe and reverence for the special places in the Chesapeake region” as noted in item 3 above. The CMP lists several types of trail-related resources associated



with American Indians, as noted in item 4 above. Some of these have been identified and mapped, but many have not. To support interpretation and conservation of American Indian resources along the trail, the National Park Service, in partnership with tribes and other organizations, has initiated steps for documenting Indigenous Cultural Landscapes (ICLs), noted above in 4(3) above. A methodology has been developed (see <http://www.nps.gov/chba/parkmgmt/upload/Summary-Report-of-ICL-Methodology-and-Recommendations-Final.pdf>) and mapping is underway in several locations along the trail. Such documentation and mapping has not yet occurred along the James River in the general vicinity of the proposed Surry-Skiffes Creek crossing. However, it is reasonable to assume there is a likelihood that ICLs exist within this area, given the patterns of known indigenous use during the contact era, existing archeologic sites, historic agricultural soil information and the presence of natural resources important to indigenous peoples; (note the existing presence of sturgeon today). Further consultation with American Indian tribes should be conducted to outline and identify these ICLs and other resources important to American Indians.

I hope the information above is helpful in communicating some of the resources, historic properties, and concerns relative to conserving visitor experiences and the landscape along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. I and my staff would be happy to talk with you further and provide additional information as this matter proceeds. Jonathan Doherty, Assistant Superintendent, will participate in the September 25 consulting parties meeting.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Hunt", written in a cursive style.

Charles Hunt  
Superintendent

c:

Julie Langan, Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
Roger Kirchen, Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
John Eddins, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Attachments: A through J



Figure 1.2:  
**Voyage Routes**

- Voyage Stop

**John Smith Voyages**

- John Smith Voyage 1
- John Smith Voyage 2
- John Smith Other Voyage

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0 5 10 20 30 Miles



**B**

**Legend**  
— Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail



**Figure 2.7f:**  
**High Potential Historic Sites, High Potential Route Segments, and Other Trail Related Resources<sup>1,2</sup>**  
 Lower Bay (5 of 5)

C

**High Potential Historic Sites**

- Significant Voyage Stops within a Setting that is Highly Evocative of the 17th Century
- ▲ Significant 17th Century American Indian Archeological Sites (including sites listed on or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places)
- ✱ Indigenous Cultural Landscapes or Sites that are Culturally Significant to Modern Chesapeake Bay Tribes (to be determined)
- Sites along the Voyage Routes that are Highly Evocative of the 17th Century<sup>3</sup>

**High Potential Route Segments**

- ▬ Rappahannock River
- ▬ James River

**Other Trail-Related Resources**

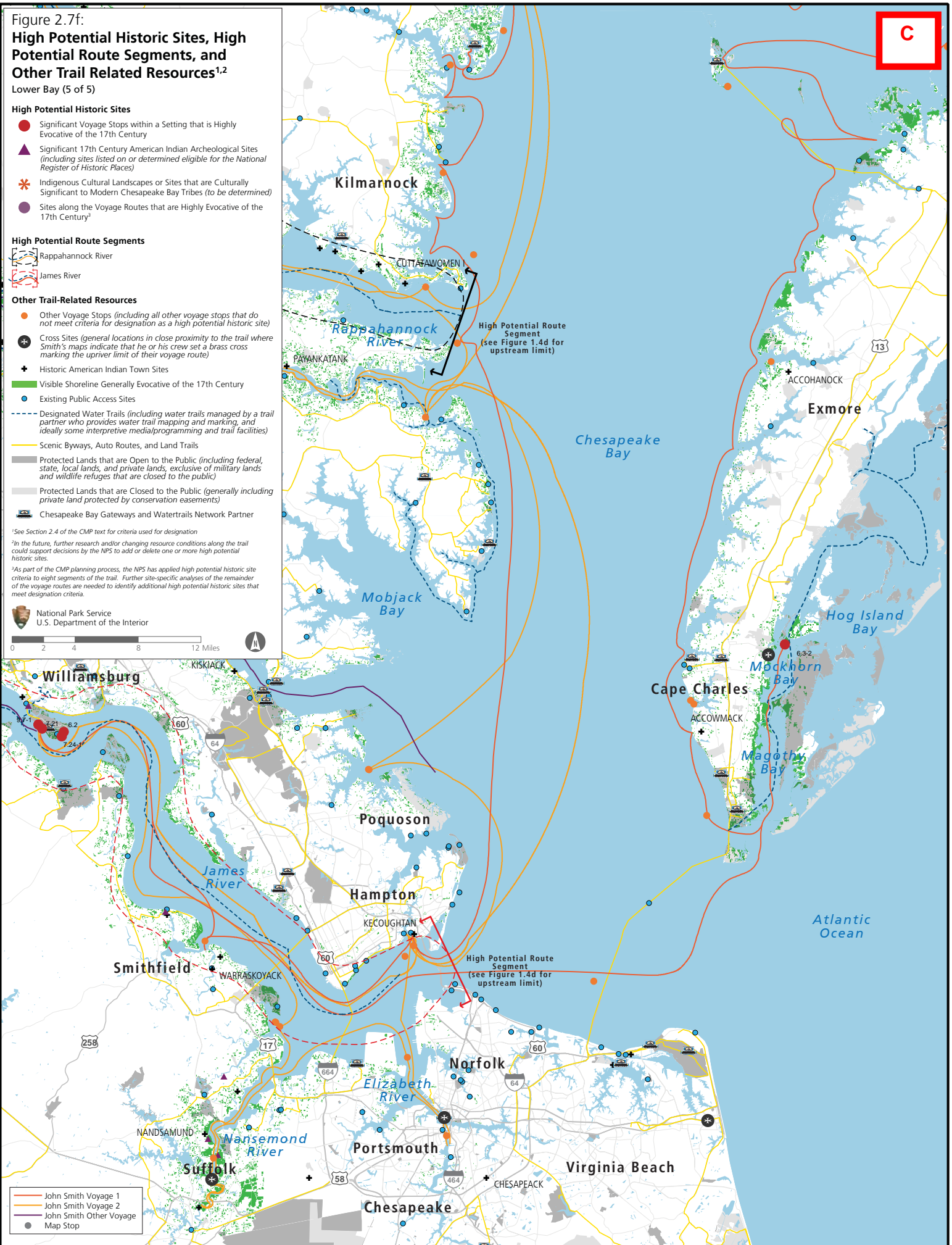
- Other Voyage Stops (including all other voyage stops that do not meet criteria for designation as a high potential historic site)
- ⊕ Cross Sites (general locations in close proximity to the trail where Smith's maps indicate that he or his crew set a brass cross marking the upriver limit of their voyage route)
- ⊕ Historic American Indian Town Sites
- ▬ Visible Shoreline Generally Evocative of the 17th Century
- Existing Public Access Sites
- - - Designated Water Trails (including water trails managed by a trail partner who provides water trail mapping and marking, and ideally some interpretive media/programming and trail facilities)
- ▬ Scenic Byways, Auto Routes, and Land Trails
- ▬ Protected Lands that are Open to the Public (including federal, state, local lands, and private lands, exclusive of military lands and wildlife refuges that are closed to the public)
- ▬ Protected Lands that are Closed to the Public (generally including private land protected by conservation easements)
- ▬ Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network Partner

<sup>1</sup>See Section 2.4 of the CMP text for criteria used for designation

<sup>2</sup>In the future, further research and/or changing resource conditions along the trail could support decisions by the NPS to add or delete one or more high potential historic sites.

<sup>3</sup>As part of the CMP planning process, the NPS has applied high potential historic site criteria to eight segments of the trail. Further site-specific analyses of the remainder of the voyage routes are needed to identify additional high potential historic sites that meet designation criteria.

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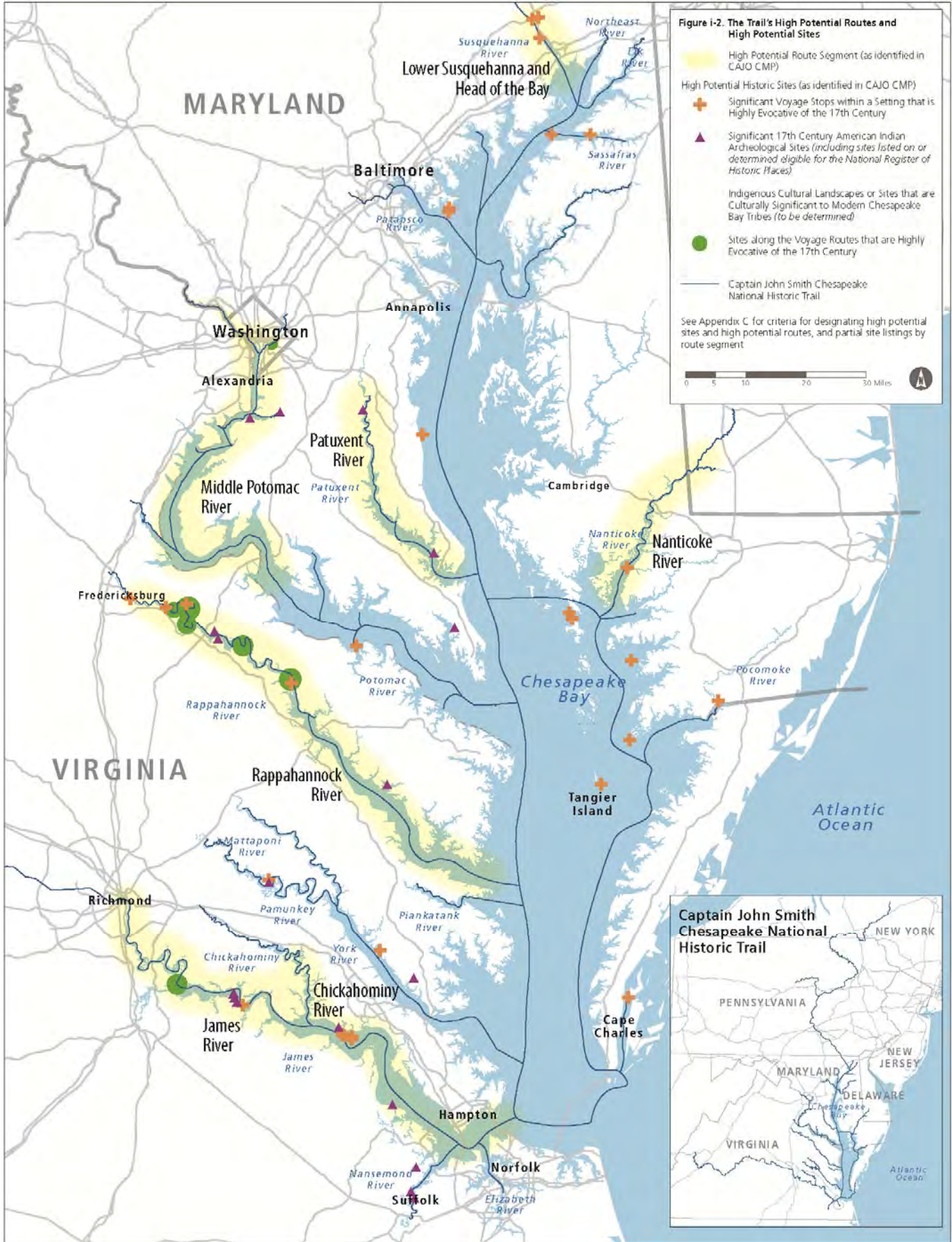
- ▬ John Smith Voyage 1
- ▬ John Smith Voyage 2
- ▬ John Smith Other Voyage
- Map Stop







Figure i-2. The Trail's High-Potential Routes and High-Potential Sites





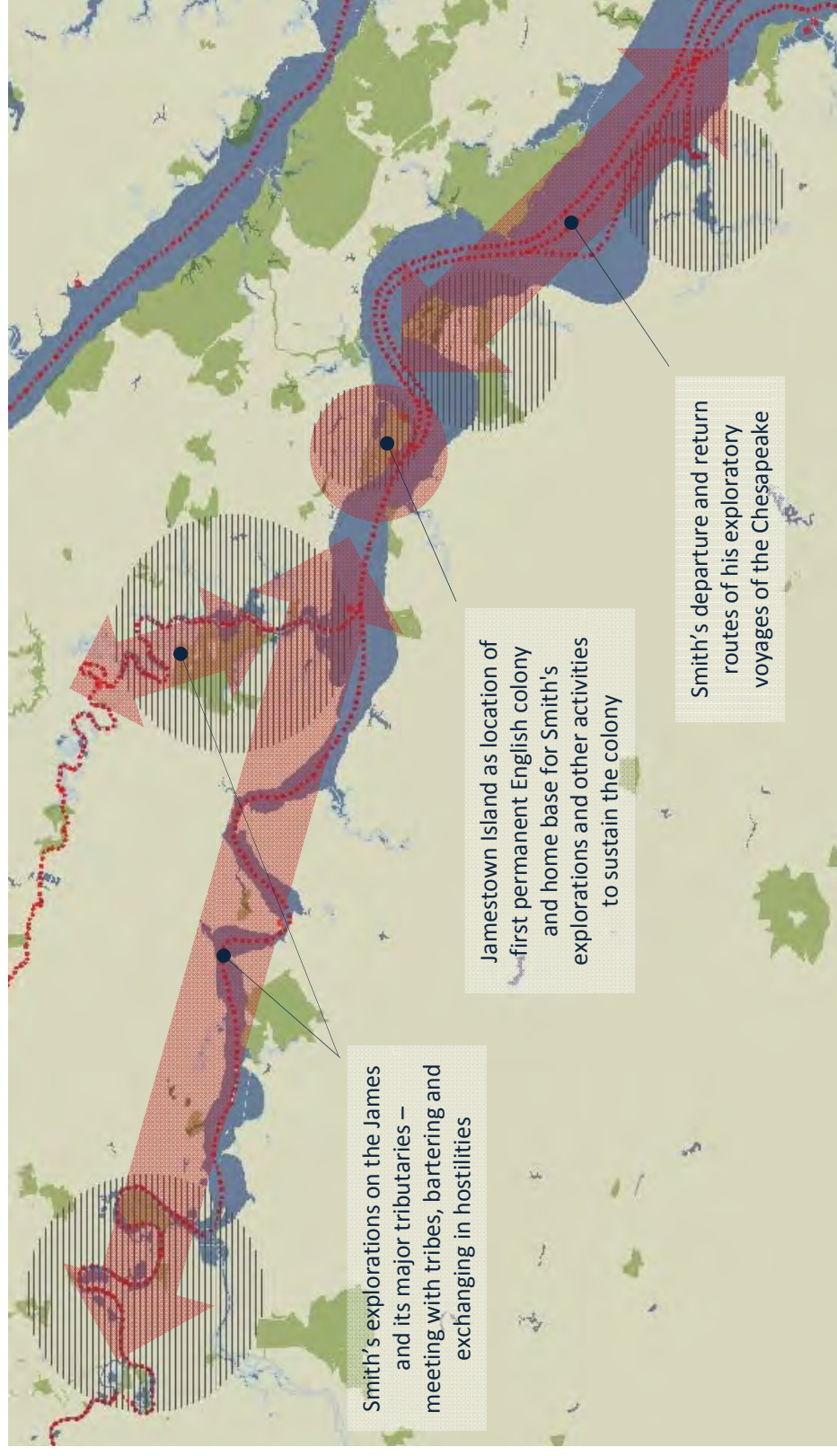
## Focus Area Locations

The illustration below shows the five focus areas described in this section. Each contains solid resources and stories associated with Smith's explorations, American Indian cultures of the time, and significant, evocative 17<sup>th</sup> century landscapes. Each focus area provides a series of different immersive visitor experience opportunities associated with the trail.



## Focus Areas in Relation to the Trail's Major Journey Themes

The map below depicts the five initial focus areas in relation to several major themes associated with John Smith's journeys on the James. These represent major themes only; a series of more detailed stories are associated with each focus area.





## Indian Tribes Associated with Focus Areas

Each of the focus areas has an association with one or more Indian Tribes. This graphic briefly summarizes several main associations. There are numerous more specific stories and resources associated with each.









# James River - CAJO Evocative Landscapes

Approximate crossing route for Skiffes Creek 500kV Transmission Line



1

2

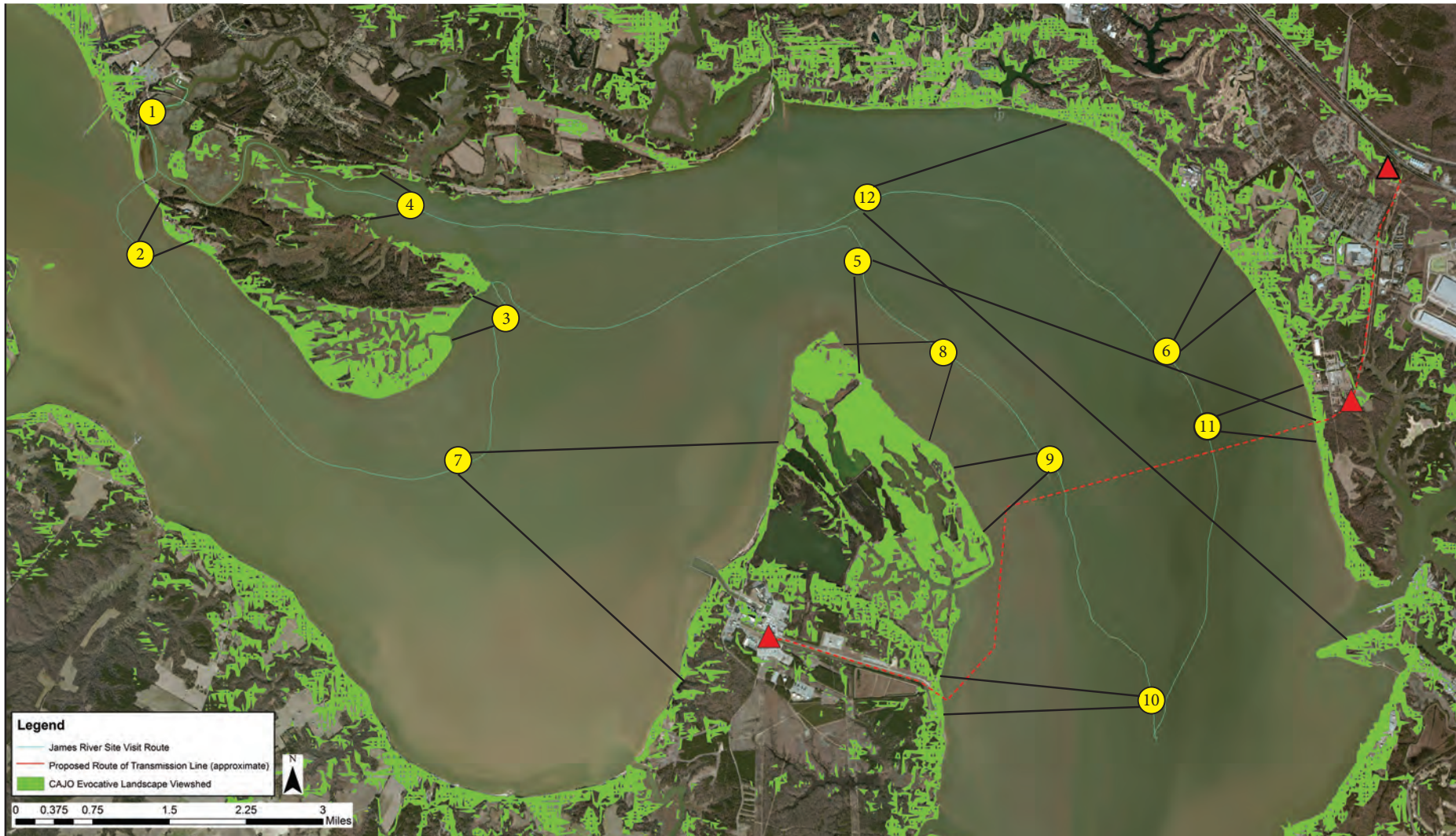
3

4

5

6

CARTERS GROVE



7

8

9

10

APPROXIMATE CROSSING LOCATION

11

APPROXIMATE CROSSING LOCATION

12