

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior



Join the Adventure

"The six and twentieth day of April, about four o'clock in the morning, we descried the land of Virginia; the same day we ent' red into the Bay of Chesupiok directly without any let or hindrance; there we landed and discovered a little away, but we could find nothing worth the speaking of, but fair meadows and goodly tall trees, with such fresh waters running through the woods as I was almost ravished at the first sight thereof."

George Percy, Virginia Colonist



*These are the Lines that shew thy Face but those
That shew thy Grace and Glory, brighter bee
Thy Faure-Discoueries and Fowle - Over throwes
Of Salvages much Civilized by thee
Best shew thy Spirit and to a Glory thy Face
So thou art Brave without-but goodly within.*

Imagine...

...a world of deep, ancient forests, water teeming with fish, shellfish and blue crab, towns of thatched houses, lodges and palisades, and people of varying tribes traveling the waterways for sustenance and trade. Such was the Chesapeake that Captain John Smith and his fellow travelers encountered while exploring this "goodly bay" and its rivers from 1607 to 1609. Though they failed in their search for the fabled Northwest Passage and did not find silver and gold, their explorations gave the English a foothold in the region. Smith's maps and writings brought transatlantic commerce to this part of the New World. The English presence here forever changed the lives of American Indians and transformed the land and Bay.

America's First National Water Trail



The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail traces the routes of Smith's voyages to explore the Chesapeake Bay and its major rivers. Along some 3,000 miles of water routes and many related sites on land, visitors gain insight into the world Smith encountered more than four hundred years ago.

Visitors enjoy intimate creeks and scenic vistas reminiscent of the Chesapeake region in the 1600s, including coves and marshes, ribbon-like tributaries, and secluded woodlands. They learn about the American Indians who interacted with Smith and the ways in which this critical contact period forever changed the Chesapeake region and the people who have called it home.



A Work in Progress

The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, designated in 2006, is an exciting way to experience the region's heritage and spend time outdoors. Visitor opportunities along the trail continue to grow. The National Park Service is working with public and private partners to create more water routes and shoreline recreation sites, as well as protected historic areas, exhibits, and educational programs.



NPS / STARKE JETT

IMAGE / COURTESY JAMESTOWN SETTLEMENT



Explore the Trail

The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail paints the world of the seventeenth-century Chesapeake—its English explorers, American Indian cultures, and rich natural abundance. Discover your shared heritage in the Chesapeake region by visiting the water routes, parks, wildlife refuges, historic sites, and museums along the trail. For more information, visit the trail website or contact the National Park Service.

www.smithtrail.net

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CHESAPEAKE BAY OFFICE
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 314
Annapolis, MD 21403
Phone 410-260-2470

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The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail offers countless opportunities for recreation and discovery. Take to the water by kayak, sailboat, or motor craft. Bicycle or hike along woodland trails, or follow winding roads through rural landscapes and historic villages. Visit places that celebrate American Indian heritage, and watch wildlife in marshes, waterways, and forests. You can also attend festivals, concerts, and demonstrations, or join a guided tour.



IMAGE / CINDY ROSS

Many sites along the trail are also part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network. Find out more about these sites and water trails at www.baygateways.net. To learn about Chesapeake sites linked to the War of 1812 explore the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail and Scenic Byway at www.nps.gov/stsp.



Experience...

Explore your options—and a continually updated roster of special events—through the trip planner at www.smithtrail.net.

SEE THE BAY AND ITS RIVERS as Smith did—by water. Smith made his own map, but you can use the official *Boater's Guide to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail*. Consult the Boater's Guide to find trailheads, facilities and water routes along the trail.

USE YOUR GPS TO UNCOVER a series of hidden "treasures" on the Captain John Smith Geotrail. The geotrail includes nearly

fifty sites on five rivers representing particular stories or scenes from Smith's adventures on the Bay four hundred years ago.

FOLLOW THE CHESAPEAKE BAY INTERPRETIVE BUOYS. These "smart" buoys deliver weather and water conditions, collect and share water quality data, and communicate information about the area during Smith's time. Access buoy information at www.buoybay.noaa.gov or by phone toll free at 1-877-BUOY BAY.

To learn more about the trail and to plan your adventure, visit www.smithtrail.net



IMAGE / CINDY ROSS