



# 1 Introducing the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The Stories of the Chesapeake Certified Heritage Area covers 1200 square miles, four counties, 21 incorporated municipalities (Table 1-000-Local Governments Served and Appendix 1-0001 - Statistics), and a host of unincorporated settlements (Maps – Base Map, Villages) Founded as Kent County in 1642, which was divided over time into Talbot County (1662), Queen Anne’s County (1706) [photo-1], and Caroline County (1773)<sup>1</sup>, the region is one of the earliest in North America to have been settled by British Europeans and Africans. Rich in shared prehistoric and historic cultures, history and natural history, and lore, traditions, and experiences, it retains much of its early character. Today, more than

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<sup>1</sup> Kent County is also the “mother county” to Cecil County (1674, formed also from Baltimore County). This is an oversimplification of the process of the creation of the four counties of this heritage area. Actually, Kent was first divided into three, with Cecil carved from the north and Talbot from the south; it then was further divided into Kent (in its final configuration) and Queen Anne’s. A statewide political compromise required the creation of a ninth county on the Eastern Shore, Caroline, which was formed from parts of both Dorchester and Talbot.

120,000 people reside here, and one-third of the local economy still is reliant on the natural resources—farmland, forests, and fisheries—that first drew Europeans to explore and later settle and trade here [photo-2-caption; photo-3].

As a region, the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area has much to offer both residents and visitors in terms of quality of life, educational and recreational experiences, and tourism opportunities. This document is a plan that further describes the many facets of this region and sets out the ideas intended to guide investment, both public and private, in the heritage of Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot Counties over the next five to fifteen years. It is the product of years of effort on the part of many individuals and partner organizations, led by Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc., a nonprofit public-private organization established to plan for and manage this heritage area.

## HERITAGE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The heritage investment envisioned in this plan is designed to capitalize on the enormous local and state investment already made in the protection of the special resources of the region and the preservation and development of its communities. From the protection of agricultural lands [photo-3] and “rural legacy” areas [photo-5] to programs for “rural villages” [photo-6] and “Main Streets,” [photo-a Main Street] not to mention significant private investment in historic residences, commercial buildings, and businesses, community leaders, civic officials, and residents have worked to maintain the significant character and landscape of the region. That investment is more than financial—the time and talents as well as the treasure of this region have been devoted to this effort. If this plan is successful, in the years ahead the residents of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area will see that investment provide still more economic and quality-of-life benefits. [See sidebar—Vision]

Special places, attractive communities, and opportunities for outstanding outdoor recreation are this region’s “golden goose.”

As community improvements have grown from investments in heritage-related resources and programs, a significant tourism industry has arisen in the region. But the two have not been deliberately linked, and tourism has been largely unplanned. This plan aims to make that link, to show how to capitalize on existing heritage efforts in order to gain added economic benefits. These economic benefits are also accompanied by rewards that are not necessarily measured in dollars, such as improvements in residents’ quality of life and the increased capabilities of many local organizations to accomplish their aims. For a relatively small additional cost, it should be possible to gain much greater benefit from tourism through planning and tourism enhancements—*without* encouraging its darker side of crowds and traffic, inauthentic offerings, and loss of sense of community.

This plan also is designed to bring new light and power to existing stewardship efforts the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, for without maintaining and strengthening that stewardship, continued investment to enhance tourism will be undermined. Special places, attractive communities, and opportunities for outstanding outdoor recreation are this region's "golden goose." [photo-7; captiontxt] With care and attention, those resources should yield sustained financial and community benefits over time.

Finally, this plan is meant to show how the *stories* of this place can add meaning to the lives of residents, young and old, and shape the visitor's experience. The appeal and depth of the stories to be told here—and those to be uncovered by the research that lies ahead—led to the name under which Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties are now joined: "Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area." Central to these stories is the Chesapeake Bay, just as it has been central to the lives of generations who created and experienced these stories. Natural resources revolve around its presence, of course, but so do cultural and working traditions on both land and water. Both prehistory and history have been shaped by what residents know simply as "The Bay."

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## A "LETTER FROM OUR FUTURE" - A VISION FOR THE STORIES OF THE CHESAPEAKE HERITAGE AREA

*In the year 2015, the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is widely regarded as a critical economic development tool supporting the careful management of cultural resources and the beautiful environment that support the quality of life and heritage tourism in this region. "Preserve, protect, interpret, promote" has become not only the mantra of the heritage area's leaders, but also that of the entire region.*

*The 2004 Heritage Management Plan gave us a new understanding of our past and our special resources, and helped us to see clear paths for working together. The plan brought new power to our sense of the future.*

*This place is still beautiful, still rural, the land of pleasant living. It has become known nationally and internationally as a place where visitors enjoy a combination of unique experiences through the creative interpretation of our history, landscape, ecosystems, and communities (our "Stories") and outdoor recreation opportunities. Support for cultural traditions and the arts [photo-8] long enjoyed here has risen to a new high. Visitors now can access more historic sites and unique businesses, they encounter many knowledgeable and hospitable residents, they now find their way around this region with*

*ease, and they have more access to the waters and rivers of Chesapeake Bay.*

*Today, visitors stay longer and spend more than they did ten years ago, and local confidence and investment in tourism have reached new levels. Tourism here, however, has not necessarily been based on increasing numbers of visitors—community preferences and capacities have guided decisions to seek larger audiences. We especially seek more effective involvement of our visitors in the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, year-round—to the point that visitors now view themselves as partners in heritage development and preservation efforts here. “Saturation” situations have been effectively addressed through regional collaboration among tourism leaders.*

*Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area has offered a significant new way to bind the region as a whole. It has stimulated effective regional cooperation to preserve community character and historic resources, and to undertake economic development relating to tourism, the arts, agriculture, and maritime industries. Residents and officials recognize that heritage tourism and preservation are key factors in economic sustainability, bringing increased prosperity, increased property values, new jobs, more entrepreneurs and economic diversity, community pride and care, and revitalized downtown cores that are vibrant and alive.*

*New leaders have emerged who understand the principles of heritage development. Many of these leaders got their start through Heritage Area initiatives, which were designed to stimulate and support a wide range of leadership. Community spirit is high, and we celebrate the rich contributions of many civic groups to our collaboration. Everyone, from property owners to businesses to government agencies, takes maximum advantage of available tools for preservation, conservation, heritage tourism, and community revitalization.*

*Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc. (ESHI), has attracted new resources and partnerships to support investment in interpretive sites, programs, events, and organizations. It has set high standards for partners’ projects and operations, to the benefit of all—our Heritage Area is a trusted partner in the operation of the state’s Heritage Area system, and we have benefited at the state level from this trust and recognition.*

*As an organization, ESHI has found success in sustaining its programs and staff, generating adequate revenues and building its capacity to “preserve, protect, interpret, promote” this special place. It regards the enhancement of its partners’ sustainability as a*

*measure of that capacity, and staff and programs are shared among these partners. Through positive action and consistent good cheer, ESHI has earned the respect of all, drawing leaders and volunteers whose dedication of time and energy has become a model for heritage areas nationwide.*

*Looking back, the management plan of 2004 was the “wind” of much beneficial change, signaling a new way of seeing the region and addressing the needs of its residents, visitors, communities, and special resources.*

### THE MISSION OF EASTERN SHORE HERITAGE, INC.

Early in a strategic planning retreat for this plan, the Board of Directors of Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc. (ESHI), captured much of the mission of the organization in this slogan: “Preserve, protect, interpret, promote.” The bylaws of Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc., state the organization’s purpose, or mission, in this way:

Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc., consisting of community organizations, businesses, private citizens, and public agencies, is organized and shall be operated for the benefit of Eastern Shore citizens. ESHI’s purpose includes but is not limited to:

- Generating awareness of Maryland’s Eastern Shore as a primary travel destination;
- Improving the regional economy by fostering economic enhancement linked to the natural, cultural, and historic resources of Maryland’s Eastern Shore; [and]
- Promoting the protection, stewardship, and enjoyment of these resources.

This management plan is the fundamental statement by ESHI’s Board of Directors concerning how this purpose is to be achieved. Chapter 8 (Management) provides a further statement as to how ESHI is to be operated in the public interest.

In general, ESHI is a public-private institution whose mission, in addition to the purpose articulated in its bylaws, is to enhance the capacity of other institutions and organizations within the four-county region of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area. These groups have excellent potential to function well as partners in creating a regional system for the preservation, protection, interpretation, and promotion of the region’s special assets and stories. ESHI will endeavor to bring new funding, ideas, and collaborative leadership to this already-healthy foundation of organizations and programs. In supporting this regional approach, Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc., will undertake on its own

ESHI will act as a force and voice for the special resources of the region that contribute to quality of life, scenic values, community character, and the visitor experience,

ESHI will act as a force and voice for the educational value of the region's special resources and will undertake regional interpretation initiatives.

account, with partners wherever possible, a limited number of strategic regional initiatives. These initiatives may include regional promotion, planning, or interpretation, or demonstration projects. ESHI may also seek to fill gaps where independent partners do not exist to address special needs and where it is inadvisable to create new organizations to fill those needs; the most apparent gap as this plan is written is regional leadership for historic preservation.

In general, ESHI's role is to:

- **“Preserve and protect”**: To act as a force and voice for the special resources of the region that contribute to quality of life, scenic values, community character, and the visitor experience, [photo-9; captiontxt] focusing on the strategic changes and regional planning needed rather than latter-day tactical issues such as individual permits for development or demolition.
- **“Interpret”**: To act as a force and voice for the educational value of the region's special resources [photo-10; captiontxt] and to undertake regional interpretation initiatives.
- **“Promote”**: To act as a force and voice for strategies to enhance the regional economy through investment in special resources, including but not limited to heritage tourism.
- **“An Institution Serving Institutions”**: To act as a clearinghouse, to assure that information reaches appropriate parties; to provide technical assistance to those partners who are striving to create programs or take actions that support ESHI's mission; and to convene special meetings and committees to examine existing and needed strategies for protecting and enhancing the special resources of the region.

## KEY HERITAGE AREA PARTNERS

### LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

There are 25 jurisdictions encompassed in this plan, that is, four counties and 21 municipalities found within the proposed Certified Heritage Area boundary.<sup>2</sup> These are all local governments with comprehensive planning

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<sup>2</sup> Barclay, Marydel, Henderson, and Templeville are not included within the boundary, but are a part of the Recognized Heritage Area—which encompasses the entirety of the four-county region.

**Table 1-000** Local Governments within the Proposed Stories of the Chesapeake Certified Heritage Area

Jurisdiction	Year Incorp.	Pop. 2000	Pop. 1990	Jurisdiction	Year Incorp.	Pop. 2000	Pop. 1990
<b>CAROLINE COUNTY</b>	1773	29,772	27,035	<b>KENT COUNTY</b>	1642	19,197	17,842
Denton	1802	2,960	2,977	Betterton	1906	376	360
Federalsburg	1823	2,620	2,365	Chestertown	1805	4,746	4,005
Goldsboro	1906	216	185	Galena	1858	428	324
Greensboro	1826	1,632	1,441	Millington	1890	416	440
Hillsboro	1853	163	164	Rock Hall	1908	1,396	1,584
Preston	1892	566	437				
Ridgely	1896	1,352	1,034				
Unincorporated areas	NA	20,894	17,181	Unincorporated areas	NA	11,129	11,835
Jurisdiction	Year Incorp.	Pop. 2000	Pop. 1990	Jurisdiction	Year Incorp.	Pop. 2000	Pop. 1990
<b>Queen Anne's County</b>	1706	40,563	33,953	<b>TALBOT COUNTY</b>	1662	33,812	30,549
Centreville	1794	1,970	2,097	Easton	1790	11,708	9,372
Church Hill	1876	530	481	Oxford	1852	771	699
Millington*	1890	416	440	Queen Anne*	1953	(at left)	(at left)
Queen Anne	1953	176	250	St. Michael's	1804	1,193	1,301
Queenstown	1892	617	453	Trappe	1827	1,146	974
Sudlersville	1870	391	428				
Unincorporated areas	NA	36,240	29,568	Unincorporated areas	NA	18,818	17,953

\* Does not have comprehensive plan responsibilities.

authority *and co-signatories to this plan by virtue of having adopted it as an amendment to their comprehensive plans, by resolution.*<sup>3</sup>

These local governments oversee the maintenance and improvement of the public domain of incorporated communities (or the county, as the case may be); own property such as parks and historic buildings; support local initiatives to preserve, protect, interpret, and promote the heritage found within their boundaries; and provide support to some heritage area partners such as local schools and county or town arts councils. Their participation in heritage area initiatives is critical to the success of this plan.

Technically, all local governments are subdivisions of the state, with their authority to govern delegated by the state. State laws governing the powers of local governments are referred to collectively as “enabling legislation.” In Maryland, Article 66B of the state’s [codes and statutes] spells out the powers of local governments to tax, spend, and regulate for the common good.

### **Counties**

County governments are powerful organizations that affect heritage development in a number of ways. As background, for most of Maryland’s counties there are basically two kinds of county governments, “charter” and “code home rule.” The powers of these governments are spelled out in Article 66B of the state’s codes and statutes. In essence, “charter” counties must ask the Maryland General Assembly for support in making major changes to their taxing authority and certain other powers; these include Talbot County. “Home rule” counties are given greater leeway in such governance; these include Caroline, Kent, and Queen Anne’s Counties. In addition to these differences among the counties, their elected officials are elected and named in slightly different ways; Caroline, Kent, and Queen Anne’s Counties elect county commissioners, three at large in Caroline and Kent, and five in Queen Anne’s County, only one of whom is elected at large (that is, serving the entire county; the other four serve only districts that are subsections of the county). Talbot County residents elect a five-person county council, at large. All counties’ administrative functions are overseen by a county manager or administrator appointed by the elected officials. Each county is organized in much the same way to provide services to its residents, including public safety (a sheriffs’ office),

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<sup>3</sup> Throughout this draft version of the heritage management plan, there are statements in boldface and italics signaling messages especially for the local governments. This plan is written with the assumption that these 25 jurisdictions will accept this plan as written, but that assumption must be proved through separate action of each jurisdiction.

infrastructure (roads, sewer, water, etc.), schools, roads, parks, and libraries, to name but the most obvious.

Each of the four counties supports a “destination management organization” (DMO), commonly called a tourism office, which is a critical feature for the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area. In Queen Anne’s County, the DMO is found within the Department of Parks and Recreation, in Caroline it is supported by a grant to the nonprofit Caroline Economic Development Corporation, and in Talbot and Kent the offices report directly to their county administrators. The DMOs receive county support and state grants, the latter generally based on how much advertising the offices pay for in the previous year beyond a \$10,000 “floor.” Their role is to promote each of the counties through advertising and working with tourism-related businesses to undertake advertising campaigns, enhance tourism offerings, and provide information in response to visitors’ requests and inquiries. Except for Caroline County<sup>4</sup>, support for these offices and their advertising generally is derived from revenues generated through accommodations (“bed”) taxes. These programs are described further in Chapter 4, Heritage Tourism. Each of the four counties also supports economic development programs that can influence business development related to tourism.

Counties also influence the development and conservation of landscapes and community character, which is fundamental to the visitor experience in this region. Long-range (“comprehensive”) planning, zoning, and the issuance and enforcement of development permits is provided by separately staffed planning offices in each county, each of which reports to the county administrator. These offices support appointed planning commissions, which are the first level of review of requests for the permits governing development and change in the county. The “buck stops” at the elected officials’ level, however.

Talbot County also has a county-wide Historic Preservation Commission, which is the sometimes the first level of review of

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<sup>4</sup> With the recent construction of a Best Western hotel in Denton, the first lodging of any size in Caroline County, the county has now established an accommodations tax of 5 percent. By way of explanation, this is a tax on visitors, not local businesses; the lodging establishments collect the tax when they bill their customers and then pass this tax on to the counties. This is a common system of support for tourism throughout the United States. In Maryland, municipalities receive the amounts collected within their jurisdictions unless they agree otherwise (to support county-wide tourism programs or other related uses of the funds). The counties use a share of the tax to support their tourism offices and their activities and advertising; all local governments use these funds also to pay for services that can be construed as supporting visitation, such as policing and streetscaping.

proposed development and building alterations, where locally designated historic resources are concerned. (Further discussion of governmental historic preservation programs is found in Chapter 7A.)

One of the most important recent initiatives by the state to change the powers of local governments is “smart growth,” especially the designation of Priority Funding Areas (PFAs), outside of which the state will generally not spend funds for development. The purpose behind this program is to prevent development from extending too far from the services offered by existing developed areas, thereby causing “sprawl.” The designation of a Certified Heritage Area (CHA) slightly changes the way that PFAs are designated and may allot more flexibility to county growth management decisions. (Municipalities are automatically PFAs.) Further discussion of the effect of the CHA designation on county PFAs is provided in Chapter 8, Management.

Counties also support the school systems for both county and municipalities within that county. These are important to the heritage area because of the potential to connect schoolchildren to interpretive sites through a wide variety of curriculum-related activities (not simply history). The four counties also support Chesapeake College, another important partner.<sup>5</sup>

### **Villages**

There are many unincorporated small settlements throughout the counties where residents have a strong association with their neighborhood; many of these are historic, whether or not they appear to be so today. These “villages” are, in fact, one of the hallmarks of this region’s cultural landscape (see Chapter 7, Community Character). All are under the supervision of the counties. They range in size and importance and include such places as Kennedyville in Kent County, a late-19<sup>th</sup> century settlement where farmers could access rail service and where a co-op today provides supplies to farmers; Wye Mills in Talbot County, established around two mills in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, one of which, Old Wye Mill, survives today; and Jonestown in Caroline County, an example of a black settlement centered on a church and school and whose roots go back to a time before the Civil War.

### **Municipalities**

The 21 municipalities that join with the four counties in supporting the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area range in size from tiny Goldsboro (pop. 216 in the year 2000) to Easton (pop. 11,708), which

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<sup>5</sup>Chesapeake College also serves a fifth county not served by the heritage area, Dorchester County.

was once known as the capital of the Eastern Shore. These are the municipalities that are responsible for planning and zoning and thus control development within their boundaries. They provide multiple services for their residents, including but not limited to water and sewer and public safety. Only Chestertown has its own visitor center; Galena also maintains a small visitor center through the help of the Galena Antiques Center.

### **Nonprofit Organizations**

The plethora of nonprofit organizations in this region makes it difficult to single out any specific group for description here. These are nongovernmental organizations organized for a specific purpose; some, such as arts councils, receive direct local government support as a part of their annual funding. They may range from civic associations and clubs to groups organized to tackle specific issues, such as health, education, social welfare, environmental protection, land conservation, the preservation of a house museum, etc. Many are active only at the community level; others extend across one or more counties. A large number of such organizations have contributed directly to the development of this plan; for names, see Appendix [000–Project List] and acknowledgments. ESHI’s mission includes finding and deploying means of encouragement for any nonprofit organization whose mission includes the preservation, protection, interpretation, or promotion (or all or any combination of these) of heritage resources.

### *Nonprofit Civic Organizations*

The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area possesses a rich tapestry of groups designed to encourage community service and relationships that lead to a greater capacity of citizens and leaders to get things done. The four county-based Chambers of Commerce, Rotary International (there are five: Chestertown, Kent Island, Centreville, St. Michael’s, Easton, and Denton), and youth, church, and veterans’ groups are examples. They balance their members’ interests and community interests as appropriate, often underwrite local events and festivals, and are a key means of getting the word out about the activities of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area.

### *Educational Institutions*

The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area has great potential in relating to institutions of higher education in the region—Chesapeake College and Washington College—and public and private schools offering classes for grades K-12. Chesapeake College’s potential areas of involvement for both faculty and student projects include not only

history and education but also hospitality. Washington College's existing areas of involvement are archeology, with great potential in history, education, and sociology. Washington College's C.V. Starr Center for the American Experience is directly involved in a program in collaboration with the Kent County public school system to enrich the teaching of history among Eastern Shore school systems. Similarly the Washington College Center for Environment and Society has skills and interests in environmental education where ESHI might become involved. ESHI's particular area of focus is most likely to be public school systems, grades K-12, working with interpretive sites to enrich the educational experience in a range of curricula.

### GOALS OF THE STORIES OF THE CHESAPEAKE HERITAGE AREA

In seeking to achieve the vision for the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, the Board of Directors has articulated a set of goals that have guided the development of this plan:

- **Tell the story of the Chesapeake** on Maryland's Eastern Shore, revealing the subtle ways that the natural world has influenced this region's history, including our agricultural and maritime heritage.
- **Protect the beauty and heritage of the region:** Protect the way of life for heritage area communities through a balance of preservation, economic development, stewardship, and quality of life.
- **Create partnerships and consensus:** Build a consensus among historic preservationists, environmentalists, and local leaders in business, agriculture, government, and education to sustain the character of the heritage area.
- **Enhance economic vitality and improve the quality of life for residents:** Improve the local and regional economies by promoting tourism and fostering related business development. In particular, focus on the small business needs of the tourism industry.
- **Craft an enriching experience for visitors:** Foster access to and management of recreational and natural areas and historic sites.
- **Offer access to Chesapeake Bay:** Offer unparalleled recreational opportunities to experience unspoiled nature and the ecological treasure of the Chesapeake Bay and its tidewater tributaries.

## CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

In undertaking to achieve these goals, the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area starts with three key advantages: experience in good planning, experience in growing tourism that reflects the natural and historic advantages of this region, and pride in the long heritage of this place, both the splendid natural environment and the beautiful historic communities. Let us examine each of these advantages in turn.

### **THIS IS A PLACE WHERE PLANNING HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE**

Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties are rural communities that have invested early in good planning. While avoiding the burdensome planning practices of "western shore" counties in Maryland, even rural ones, instincts for good government here have resulted in a practical and up-to-date manner of planning that fits well with community needs. In fact, the region has in general benefited from close observation of the mainland counties' struggles to manage growth so that its benefits outweigh its costs, and from the progressive state programs that grew up to support these efforts. As a result, the land conservation, farmland protection, historic preservation, cultural conservation, community development, and archeological research are all at the cutting edge of practice in the United States. To take the most obvious example, fully 20 percent of the land designated as outside planned growth areas in this region has been permanently protected. (In Maryland as a whole, that figure is 18 percent.)

It is possible, however, to do more, much more. The pressures for growth and change that are steadily increasing will be far less manageable if jurisdictions here do not make the commitments and investments to "get to the next level," and swiftly. Rather than reflecting the unique and special qualities of this place, our communities and our landscape could soon be stamped as "Anywhere, USA." Modern forces for development are almost overwhelming everywhere in the United States. Good planning here has given us good schools, safe communities, and beautiful places to live and work, worship and play. These assets in turn have made this region attractive to modern development; this development, though often attractive, is out of scale and pattern to the way this region has developed to date. Older patterns of growth featured construction of homes one-by-one in the countryside on farms and small lots, and in groups on small lots in the towns and villages, following the existing street patterns. Today, new residential construction in towns and villages is minimal (although the Priority Funding Area program and other state programs are working to change this). Wherever it goes, this development often takes up much more land per residential unit than development used previously and it is designed as self-contained

neighborhoods rather than extending previous settlement patterns. Hundreds of homes built at one time are now common, reflecting economies of scale, changes in the manufacture of modern residences, and changes in the tastes of homebuyers. Commercial construction is designed to be served by the automobile and the scale of larger retail development reflects modern “big box” enterprises pursuing economies of scale through ever-larger amounts of merchandise.

The heritage area is indeed fortunate in both its long-term state and local leadership to have achieved this level of protection. Now, however, this may only make this region more attractive to the development pressures it is now experiencing everywhere, without reducing those pressures on enough of the landscape to preserve its essential character. Unless we can achieve greater protections for the other “80 percent,” we are likely to lose many of the qualities of life prized by residents.

Even with these changes in the forces for development, however, it should be possible to insist that development in this “land of pleasant living” should respect the hard-won investments made to date, and become part of continued efforts to improve communities here. From stewardship that emphasizes land conservation to preserve the countryside, we need to consider just what we are attempting to preserve. Land conservation alone cannot preserve the *character* of the countryside. We need to trust native instincts for preservation and good design, require respect for such preservation and design in the process of development and change, and create incentives to get the best of results—not simply prevent the worst from happening.

As this region pursues even greater stewardship, education will be key. The promise of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is that its emphasis on interpretation will help to enhance local appreciation for the special resources and history here. As one result of such appreciation, we would expect local governments and organizations to find still more programs and people enlisting in the quest for more stewardship.

### **THIS IS A PLACE THAT MAXIMIZES BENEFITS FROM TOURISM**

If we do not engage in even greater stewardship, tourism will suffer. Tourism has been a part of the regional economy for well over a hundred years—“summer visitors” first appeared in the region in the 1870’s [photo-11]— but it is not always recognized for its beneficial qualities:

- Tourism’s predominantly micro-business, “mom and pop” quality offers greater ease of entry to business ownership, more local entrepreneurs who can provide community leadership, and more diversity in the economic structure of the region.

- For those tourism businesses that can support part-time and full-time employment beyond the immediate business owners, part-time incomes support families whose traditional incomes are not sufficient to meet their needs. More part-time and entry-level full-time jobs for young people can lead to their increasing participation in local business.
- Dollar for dollar, the historic preservation that should accompany this emphasis on tourism yields more jobs than new construction. [photo-12]
- Visitors' dollars support a greater variety of enjoyable experiences for residents than the residents' support alone would bring. Civic groups vie for these dollars with annual events that support their community service year-round.
- With visitor spending come accommodation, sales, and other taxes that support local government expenditures.
- Local investment in tourism will remain in the community, for tourism (like farming and forestry) is an industry that cannot export its jobs overseas.
- Communities with more tourism are more attractive to other kinds of economic investment—they are more competitive in providing the kinds of environments now sought by business owners and their employees.

### **THIS IS A PLACE THAT HONORS ITS HERITAGE**

The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is the beneficiary of generations of work to protect the special places reflecting both the historic and natural heritage of the region. The public has strongly supported initiatives to assure that many sites are a part of the public and nonprofit domain. Elsewhere in this plan, readers will find stories of the creation of Wye Island Natural Resource Management Area, Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, and Tuckahoe State Park, all of which were the means of resolving local protests in reaction to initial proposals for other kinds of development (a dam and lake for the latter, housing for the other two). Other, locally managed natural and recreational sites have also found their way into the public trust, either through local government acquisitions of parkland or through nonprofit action. These lands are extensive - see [Map 000—Lands Protected by Public Ownership].

History is a part of the public dialogue here, and a spur to both public and private action to achieve both historic preservation and local educational opportunities.

Local government and nonprofit action have also assured the preservation of a large number of historic sites, from county courthouses and municipal buildings to churches and house museums.[photo-13] There is, in fact, a quite significant amount of nonprofit action in the region to preserve museum-quality structures and make them accessible to the public; this region supports many museums utilizing early structures and objects. Long-standing private stewardship of residential and commercial buildings is even greater in extent, reflecting a strong native sense of the economic benefits of conserving built resources and an appreciation for the architecture traditional to this region. Much of this preservation is done deliberately in celebration of the history reflected by these buildings. Owners of many of these buildings have been generous in allowing house tours to benefit various historical organizations. History, in short, is a part of the public dialogue here, and a spur to both public and private action to achieve both historic preservation and local educational opportunities.

The subsection above on planning suggests that it is time to reach to the “next level” in preserving community character. Heritage preservation is a key part of such action. Here, again, this region has a strong foundation from which to build toward that next level. It should be possible, given greater public education about the needs and possibilities, to spark even more dedication to heritage preservation. This is an expected part of the mission of heritage areas in the Maryland program.

### THE ROOTS OF THE STORIES OF THE CHESAPEAKE HERITAGE AREA

The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area began as a regional initiative in 1997, when the tourism directors of Kent, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot Counties joined with the [what is Lee’s title?] executive secretary to the Caroline County Commissioners<sup>6</sup> and a member of the staff of the Maryland Historical Trust, Michael Day, to begin exploring the possibilities of a heritage area for this region. They were responding to the establishment, in the year before, of the Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program. This informal group, known as the “Heritage Advisory Panel” (soon shortened to “HAP team”), sought funds from the four county governments to undertake a background study of the area, with the help of a matching grant from the Maryland Historical Trust. Washington College, Chesapeake College, and Senator Paul S. Sarbanes provided additional encouragement and support.

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<sup>6</sup> Caroline County did not have a tourism program at that time.

The HAP team was one result of regional relationships that extended across county lines well before the team's formation. Governmental relationships were key, of course, as elected officials and staff of county and municipal governments worked together on various other regional initiatives. In addition, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties had developed relationships and interests through, first, the Chester River Association (CRA), a nonprofit organization, and second, a special event, the International Countryside Stewardship Exchange. The CRA and the two county governments worked with a national organization, now known as the Glynwood Center and based in the Hudson River valley, to bring a team of domestic and British experts to explore existing efforts to preserve the landscape and communities of those two counties and make recommendations. The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy was also a participant. This special event drew considerable public interest and reinforced the sense that the region had a special heritage worthy of redoubled efforts to preserve it.

The HAP team's formation reflected an early decision to expand from the two-county heritage preservation initiative of the international exchange to include Talbot and Caroline Counties. A key principle in rural tourism is to assemble a critical mass, sufficient to assure visitors that there is enough to do that a region is worthy of at least a day's visit and preferably more. The HAP team recognized the need to join both the tourism resources of the four counties and the contributions of four counties' governmental resources—"many hands make light work." No one county and no pair of counties was prepared to undertake a heritage area on its own—it made sense, even though the resulting region would be the state's largest heritage area, to unite the four counties in this effort.

In 1999, the HAP team completed its first study with the help of a consulting group, JMA/Watson of Bowie, Maryland, and West Chester, Pennsylvania. This led in short order to an application for the first level of state recognition in the state's heritage program, "Recognized Heritage Area" status, which was granted in 2000. The application itself consisted of another significant study that, along with the feasibility study, provided a foundation for this plan.

Throughout this period, the HAP team worked to expand its base of support and recruit additional leaders to this effort. Public meetings brought public interest, and additional leaders emerged from these and other sources. The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum became involved during this time. This early organizing soon resulted in the determination that a new organization altogether was needed—no one organization then involved was able to carry the responsibilities of a heritage area. By 2000, the HAP team had evolved into a functioning committee that sought 501(c)(3) status as a private, nonprofit organization under the name of Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc., or ESHI.

The organization sought to have this same name for the heritage area, concerned that the initial name for the region, “Upper Eastern Shore,” was inappropriate to the geographic sense of many regional residents who considered their location as “Mid Shore.” The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority rejected “Eastern Shore Heritage Area,” however, since Maryland’s Eastern Shore is the geographic name generally given to nine counties. The name of the heritage area would have to wait for further planning.

Creation of ESHI occasioned considerable thought as to how to organize a board of directors and recruit members. The founding board created bylaws that called for a mix of public and private representation, feeling that although governmental leadership had been key in initiating the work, a heritage area requires significant private involvement on the part of both nonprofit organizations and businesses. In order to stimulate partnerships with key organizations, both governmental and nonprofit, the board was organized with appointed directors as well as elected ones. The bylaws were revised in 2002 to allow voting powers equally to all directors and to clarify the appointment of members of a panel of non-voting advisors. Appointed Directors are named by the four county governing bodies; the four county-based Chambers of Commerce; the four county-based Destination Management Organizations (tourism offices); Washington College; and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. Thirteen At-large Directors are elected by ESHI members; every county must have at least two At-large Directors and all are required to possess qualifications that support the aims of a heritage area.

Nonprofit status positioned ESHI obtain a major state grant for creation of the heritage management plan necessary to advance to the second and final level of state recognition, as a “Certified Heritage Area.” This grant was awarded in 2002 for a period of two years. A key partner in the grant application was Washington College, whose services included housing and administering the first ESHI offices and staff. Executive Director Elizabeth Watson—who had participated in the heritage area initiative as a consultant from its inception—was hired to establish the office and lead the planning effort.

## THE HERITAGE AREA CONCEPT

In recent decades, communities across the nation have begun to realize the potential economic and social benefits of preserving, interpreting, and promoting the heritage of large areas that share the same geography, culture, and history. These “heritage areas” are designed to take advantage of an important trend in tourism development—heritage tourism. Many visitors are seeking more than entertainment on their vacations. They often want to learn more about the history and environment of what they are seeing and participate in the unique,

authentic experiences of particular places. Market research indicates that heritage tourists spend more money, stay longer, and contribute more to sustainable economic development.

## **THE HERITAGE AREAS MOVEMENT**

Heritage areas began with the designation by Congress of the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor in Illinois in 1981, followed in the later 1980's by the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and the Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor in eastern Pennsylvania. These early heritage areas established federal commissions as the regional managing entities; later examples have established federally designated nonprofit organizations, which offer more flexibility in administration. Today, there are 23 Congressionally designated heritage areas (the word "heritage area" emerged in the early 1990's as practitioners recognized that the concept could apply to regions of all kinds, not simply corridors). After a dozen years of discussion in the halls of Congress it appears that federal legislation for program under the National Park Services could emerge at the end of the Congressional session this fall.

Not all heritage areas are federal; indeed, in the 1970's, both Massachusetts and New York, inspired by the example of Lower National Historical Park established in 1972, created systems of "urban cultural parks." New York has now renewed its dedication to such a system and renamed these as heritage areas, adding a federally designated heritage area for the Erie Canal. Pennsylvania, however, was the real pioneer in establishing a state heritage area system (known first in that state as "heritage parks"). Many of Pennsylvania's heritage areas have since been federally designated. Other state programs include Colorado and Maryland.

## **MARYLAND'S HERITAGE AREAS PROGRAM**

The State of Maryland began its heritage area program in 1996 in response to the recognition that many of the state's visitors come to enjoy its history and environment. To manage the program, the state created the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA). The MHAA developed a two-tier system of designation for heritage areas within the state: Recognized Heritage Areas and Certified Heritage Areas. Each of these levels comes with its own set of requirements. The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is currently a Recognized Heritage Area, having applied for and received this designation in 2000. Recognized Heritage Areas are eligible for planning grants to advance to the next level, and are promoted as heritage areas by the state. Other benefits, however, require the heritage area to reach certified status.

To achieve the status of a Certified Heritage Area, the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is required to undertake more extensive documentation and analysis of its resources and set forth strategies for achieving more heritage preservation and tourism. This plan is designed to meet these requirements, detailed in [Appendix 1-0001]. The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority makes the final decision on designating a Certified Heritage Area, and the plan then becomes the basis for the work of the heritage area's management entity, in this case Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc.

Since the establishment of Maryland's program in 1996, twelve Maryland Heritage Areas have been established from Cumberland's Canal Place Heritage Area to multi-county heritage areas that include such towns as St. Mary's City, Havre de Grace, and Pocomoke City.

Dorchester County's Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area and the three-county Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area have completed their management plans and are now "certified." Once the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area attains certified status, specifically identified places and projects listed in this management plan are qualified to apply for state funds dedicated to heritage investment. Owners of historic properties may be eligible to apply for tax credits for rehabilitation and heritage tourism businesses may be able to obtain special state loans.

Maryland's program is an innovator in the heritage areas movement in three significant ways: First, it provides tax incentives keyed to heritage areas. Second, the program requires that local governments adopt the heritage area plan as a part of their comprehensive plans--reasoning that if the state is to invest in these programs, the local governments should commit to protecting and supporting that investment. Finally, in its emphasis on targeted investment areas, known as "Target Investment Zones" (although not zoning in the traditional usage under local government growth management programs), Maryland's requirements for community capital improvement planning based on heritage development are significant.

### **ABOUT THIS PLAN: METHODOLOGY**

Lead partners in the heritage area initiative have been the four counties, Washington College, Chesapeake College, and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. The Eastern Shore Land Conservancy has also provided assistance and encouragement. Many other partners operating interpretive sites and programs, both natural and historic, have been contributors as well. Although much remains to be done to forge stronger relationships between ESHI and these partners, the planning process has marked the beginning of relationship-building.

The planning process has included a significant level of public outreach, involving [two] rounds of public meetings, in November of 2003, when four meetings were held, and [May of 2004, when one meeting was held]. These meetings represent the culmination of meetings that have taken place over the years since the Heritage Area Planning Team began its work. Because so many meetings had taken place prior to the formal heritage area management planning process, the Board of Directors chose to focus public participation in the early months using two other methods, a project nominating process and specialized committees.

First, in August of 2002, ESHI issued a “Request for Project Proposals,” encouraging local governments, nonprofit and civic groups, and businesses and individuals to nominate projects for inclusion in this plan. This entailed reaching out to these potential partners, and gained their specific attention in their work to understand the heritage area concept sufficient to match their ambitions to those of ESHI. More than 150 projects ultimately emerged from this process (see Appendix 6-000).

Second, ESHI organized a series of committees to focus on various topics in the plan: three, established by the bylaws, organized the Board of Directors into groups overseeing promotion (the “marketing committee”), project implementation (which covered both project nominations and the designation of Target Investment Zones), and stewardship. These committees met routinely throughout the planning process. The public was invited to participate in “stakeholder” committees organized around the eight interpretive topics first identified for interpretive planning purposes (African American heritage, agriculture, archeology, colonial and early national heritage, maritime heritage, nature, religious heritage, and small towns). From an organizing session held in November of 2002, African American heritage and maritime heritage committees became especially active (the African American heritage committee also yielded a new board member), and single religious heritage and nature committee meetings provided strong direction for the plan. Other topics have been addressed in other ways; in particular, interpretive sites (which generally address most interpretive topics) have been gathered in four meetings from September 2003 to March 2004, to review planning for a regional approach to interpretation.

In addition to these formal processes, ESHI’s executive director toured the counties in the company of county officials, ESHI board members, and volunteers, met with key individuals such as the parks and recreation directors, and addressed a wide variety of civic groups about the plan. Two newsletters were issued, in the fall of 2002 at the beginning of the project and in the fall of 2003; two “annual meetings” of ESHI provided opportunities for further outreach to members and others; and newspaper coverage and radio and newspaper advertising provided ongoing public outreach.

## THE CONTENTS OF THIS PLAN

The remainder of this plan offers chapters on specific topics, most of which end with recommended strategies and actions to be followed by Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc., as the managing entity, and partners. In essence, each chapter examines in detail how to create a systematic collaboration among partners in areas that are critical to the success of the heritage area. Here is what this plan contains:

**Chapter 2 explains the significance and history** of the region covered by the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area. The history is divided into six sections that correspond to the interpretive outline.

**Chapter 3 sets forth an interpretive outline** centered on the Chesapeake Bay's influence on this region's heritage and development, and reflecting the heritage area's interests in both natural resources and history. It calls for a number of strategies and actions to support the development of a regional interpretive system comprising nearly 100 active and potential interpretive sites.

**Chapter 4 addresses heritage tourism**, especially marketing programs. More than 600 businesses are reliant at least in part on tourism in this region. Bringing these businesses into the heritage area's programs is critical. This chapter also sets forth strategies and actions.

**Chapter 5 covers physical linkages** around the region, including the creation of a system of visitor reception and orientation sites, wayfinding (signage), regional and special opportunities for touring, water access, scenic byways, roads, and streets, bicycling, and regional recreational planning.

**Chapter 6 explains the Target Investment Zones** to be established in the Certified Heritage Area. No "TIZs" are officially established with the passage of this plan; rather, "Proposed TIZs" are listed for later action. *Jurisdictions amending their plans with this one are accepting this list and delegating supervision of the details of converting TIZs from proposed to active status to ESHI.*

**Chapter 7 is on the stewardship of the heritage area.** It is actually a series of multiple sub-chapters comprising the heritage area's approach to conserving community character and the special resources and values that contribute to that character: historic, archeological, cultural, and scenic. These are features of local planning requiring much greater attention if the heritage area is to be successful in preserving key elements of the landscape. It is these features, taken as a whole, that make this region unique; they are critical dimensions of the region's significance to the nation.

**Chapter 8 covers management** of the heritage area, including ESHI's roles with relation to each of the activities described in the foregoing chapters. It also describes the boundary and the process for amending the boundary as may be required over time.

**Chapter 9 summarizes the strategies and actions**, applying "order of magnitude" costs to these, and sets forth an analysis of the potential return on investment if the heritage area is successful in directing added investment to special resources and projects. It also provides measures for evaluating the heritage area's performance over time. Appendix 1 is a table providing information on the projects nominated for the plan.

