

Stories..

EASTERN SHORE HERITAGE NEWSLETTER - FALL 2005

Serving Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's and Talbot Counties

New Benefits Now Available in the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area

GRANTS

Planning, design, interpretation, marketing, and programming are eligible for 50% matching grants through statewide competition. Maximum grant award is \$50,000, available to local governments and nonprofit groups.

TIZ* GRANTS

Local governments or nonprofit groups may receive 50% matching funds for capital improvements (property acquisition, development, preservation, and restoration). Maximum grant award is \$100,000.

REHAB TAX CREDITS

State income tax credits of 20% for the rehabilitation of *non*-historic structures, when a rehab enhances the heritage area and the visitor experience. (This is over and above Maryland's rehab tax credit program for designated *historic* residential and commercial structures.)

*TIZ = Target Investment Zone. The management plan for the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area recommends more than 20 TIZs (see map, page 6, & story, page 7). Local governments will work with ESHI to designate final TIZ boundaries and projects when they are ready to devote five years to achieving their commitments.

Contd. page 2



Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Now Certified!

On April 20, 2005, the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area received final state certification from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, following three years of work at the local level to document the region's heritage resources, propose initiatives in a management plan, and enlist local jurisdictions in the regional program.

The state's action makes new benefits available to local governments, nonprofit organizations, and owners of historic buildings and other properties that can be used to support heritage tourism. (See sidebar at left.)

Legislation passed in the last Maryland General Assembly makes up to \$3 million available to the program statewide starting in the summer of 2007, up from the current \$1 million.

The heritage area serves Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties (see map, page 6).

Jurisdictions that have agreed to join the heritage area so far are Betterton, Centreville, Chestertown, Easton, Goldsboro, Greensboro, Hillsboro, Millington, Ridgely, Rock Hall, and Sudlersville. (Contd. page 6)

Hold These Dates!

Annual Meeting of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area

Fri., Oct. 14, 2005
3:30 - 5:30 p.m.,
Easton. Senator Paul S. Sarbanes is guest speaker.

The Business of Heritage Tourism

Tues., Nov. 1, 2005
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.,
Easton.

Grant-writing Workshop

Tues., Nov. 29, 2005
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.,
Chesapeake College.

For More Information,
email ajackson@storiesofthechesapeake.org
or call 410-778-1460.



Stories OF THE CHESAPEAKE HERITAGE AREA

This issue of *Stories* is the official Executive Summary of the *Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan*. To see the full, final plan visit www.storiesofthechesapeake.org.

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What And Where Is This? See Page 7!



New Benefits, Cont'd

PROPERTY TAX CREDITS

Local governments may enact local property tax credits to offset property taxes owed resulting from rehab of *non*-historic structures for up to 10 years. (This is over and above two other local-option property tax programs for locally designated historic districts.)

TIZ TAX CREDITS

Over and above all tax benefits described above, Maryland's 20% rehab tax credit may be available for the rehab of non-listed, non-designated historic structures within TIZs.

TIZ LOANS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Local governments or other appropriate entities may receive loans for the preservation of heritage resources and the enhancement of heritage attractions and visitor services. Also, loans may go to local governments or nonprofit groups from the proceeds of state revenue bonds, for revenue-producing projects that can pay the bonds' debt service.

STATE PROGRAM SUPPORT

Certain Maryland agencies (including DHCD, DBED, DNR, and MDOT) must support the Heritage Area in planning, development, use, regulation, and other assistance. This includes promotion of the state's heritage areas by Maryland's Office of Tourism Development. *All* state agencies must cooperate and coordinate with the Heritage Area Management Entity and ensure that their activities are consistent with the management plan and will not have an adverse effect on the historical and cultural resources of the area unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative.

OPERATING ASSISTANCE & MINI-GRANTS

The heritage area's management entity (ESHI) is eligible for 50% matching grants of up to \$100,000 for operations for at least five years following heritage area certification (through state fiscal year 2009). ESHI may re-grant as much as \$10,000 for "mini-grants" to heritage area projects proposed by partner groups and agencies.



Conserving Community Character

"Stewardship"- caring for resources, in this case not financial resources but actual physical ones - is a critical heritage area responsibility, shared by a wide variety of actors, especially owners, governments, and nonprofit organizations.

Stewardship in a heritage area involves caring for the entire landscape, including the historic buildings, communities, public domain, open space, natural areas, farmlands, and other qualities of the landscape that make this a special place.

The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area possesses one of the best records in the nation of protecting land, especially farmland and natural areas, thanks to the long-standing and extensive work of the four county governments, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Maryland Environmental Trust, the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, and other private land conservation organizations. More than 20 percent of the landscape here is protected through public ownership or easements, and more is sure to follow.

There are fewer tools and efforts, however, to address the more textured issue of community character. The heritage area plan focuses on four critical components of community character: historic preservation; archeology; cultural conservation; and scenic protection.



James Webb Cabin, Caroline County
(photo courtesy Caroline County Historical Society)

Big Ideas



... for Keeping this Region Beautiful

- Voluntary countryside design guidelines to assist property owners and developers
- Planning and protecting state and national scenic byways in all four counties
- Focused technical planning assistance to small towns and villages on historic preservation and community design
- Expansion of local policies and programs that explicitly support the protection of scenic views and areas, especially water views
- Work with the counties to develop explicit strategies for protecting scenic resources
- Expansion of "greenprinting" to all four counties (Talbot's program already exists)



Cemetery at St. Stephen's Methodist Church, Unionville

...for Supporting Unique Ways of Life

- A "sacred sites" initiative, to be defined in collaboration with church and community leaders
- An "atlas of Eastern Shore traditions" as a research and publishing project
- A nonprofit guild of individuals presenting cultural traditions to visitors, to enhance availability of support to individuals, and recognition of tradition bearers as "Local Treasures"
- A "storyteller laureate" program to encourage artists of all kinds (all artists are storytellers!) to work with schoolchildren on identifying and celebrating their heritage

... for Protecting Historic & Archeological Sites

- A region-wide revolving fund and emergency grant fund for historic and archeological sites
- Enhanced and regionalized services in preservation planning, inventorying, database development, research, permit reviews, etc., for historic district and planning commissions
- Upgraded local protections and incentives for historic preservation and archeology in the development process
- A visible and highly active public archeology program

Interpretation is the “Heart and Soul” of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area

Interpreting the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is critical to the effort to preserve and promote the heritage in the towns and countryside of Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot Counties.

The heritage area is already rich in compelling interpretive sites, events, and programs. Many buildings and public lands have entered the public trust (governmental and nonprofit) because community leaders could not bear to see them lost. Community events have been impelled by a sense of local identity. Educational and outreach programs, on-site and off-site, seek to deepen residents’ and visitors’ knowledge and understanding of special places. Currently, however, many sites and programs are privately supported at minimal levels and run by dedicated volunteers.

The challenge is to enhance the resources available to these existing sites and programs. The heritage area is charged with encouraging high-quality “story-telling” (see following pages). It must also create a region-wide interpretive *system* that nourishes each individual part, market it to visitors and residents, and encourage more local wealth to be devoted to its improvement.

Interpretation in the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area begins with the “central story” (see below). The practical result of the Chesapeake Bay



A picture may be worth a thousand words, but sometimes interpretation is still needed to complete a story. This small building, originally a bank, was built on the courthouse square in Denton from stones salvaged from a building destroyed in the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904.

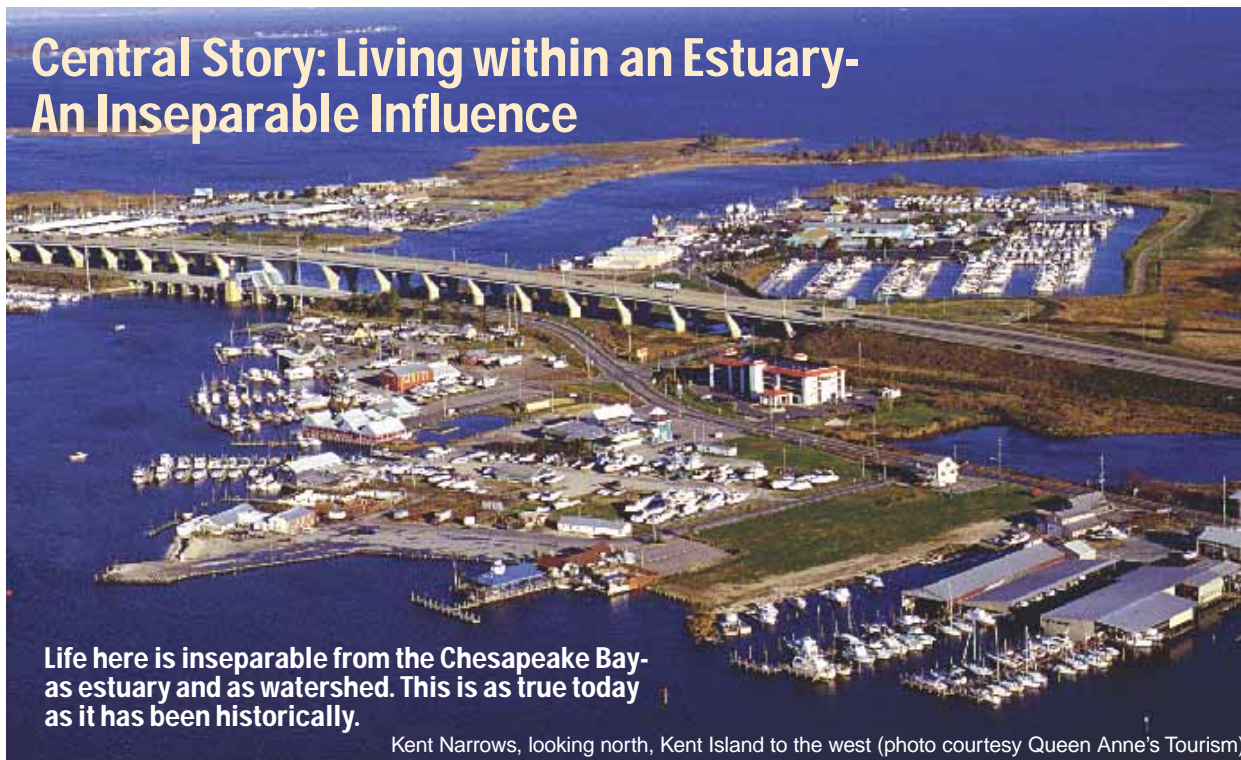
central story should be that audiences will always discover how a given site, event, or community relates to the Bay and its tributaries, historically or in the present, or both. Used to help introduce all interpretive offerings, it will create a compelling linkage among them as visitors and residents move from place to place.



An effective interpretive program grows out of the answers to these critical questions:

- What stories will be told?
- Who will listen to these stories?
- How will target audiences experience the heritage area?
- What might stand in the way? What are the issues and opportunities?
- How can interpretation assist an organization’s and a heritage area’s goals?
- What techniques are to be used to tell stories effectively?
- Do the dollars and people exist to implement the recommendations?
- What strategies can overcome obstacles to get from point A to B?

Central Story: Living within an Estuary- An Inseparable Influence



Life here is inseparable from the Chesapeake Bay- as estuary and as watershed. This is as true today as it has been historically.

Kent Narrows, looking north, Kent Island to the west (photo courtesy Queen Anne’s Tourism)



The Heritage Area’s Roles for Interpretation

- Enlarging the organizational capacity of interpretive partners and bringing them together to work collaboratively
- Organizing periodic interpretive “campaigns” as a way of focusing the participation and improvement of multiple sites
- Undertaking demonstration programs
- Undertaking interpretive activities on a regional basis
- Encouraging public programming that also supports stewardship
- Providing support and technical assistance for individual programs and projects

Three Supporting Themes

Three supporting stories about the tangible evidence marking the culture and the landscape should be woven throughout the interpretation created for the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area.

Inspired by the Bay: Cultural & Artistic Expression



Adkins Arboretum, Caroline County

Building by the Bay: Architecture & Landscapes



Water Street, Chestertown

Recreation & Renewal by the Bay



Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center

Our Stories...

Changes in the Land

The Chesapeake Bay is a dynamic natural system with humans as an integral part.



Galena and the Sassafras River

The stories of how humans have lived in the Chesapeake Bay region are everywhere. Galena, a mile away from the Georgetown working waterfront of the Sassafras River (top of photo), enjoys a strategic location on the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway, bordered by a heavily forested tributary stream (upper right) and Colchester Farm, a community-supported agricultural preserve (upper left). (Photo by Dr. Wayne Bell)



Peopling the Land... Change & Continuity

Residents here, past and present, have selectively embraced change in response to the particular resources and geography of Chesapeake Bay, and in the process, have themselves changed this place.

Wye House, Talbot County

This colonial plantation home, occupied continuously by the same family since it was built, splendidly illustrates the “continuity” part of the story of settlement here. This is a story that can reach as far back as 13,000 years to the “first people” of the Delmarva Peninsula, and as recently as yesterday. (Photo courtesy National Register of Historic Places)

Colony & Nation Building

This region both participated in and contributed to processes and events central to the growth and continued prosperity of colonial Maryland. With time, the region also contributed to the broader patterns of nation-building.

Poplar Grove Slave Cabin Excavation

Students attending Washington College’s summer archeology field school in 2004 studied the lives of the bonded, enslaved, and free servants who occupied this modest 18th century dwelling over more than 200 years. Their research offers new information for use in interpretive programs. (Photo courtesy Washington College Archeology Program)



Food for the Soul... Religion and Belief

The history of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is closely interwoven with the story of religious toleration and denominational development spanning the 17th to the 20th centuries. The religious heritage here in turn is linked in powerful ways to Abolition and the Underground Railroad.



Dudley's Chapel, Sudlersville

The religious pluralism found on the Eastern Shore was an unusual feature of colonial society here—this region saw four religious denominations before the Revolutionary War, and religion marked this landscape with hundreds of chapels and churches over the centuries. This solidly built Methodist Chapel near the Delaware line is one of the earliest Methodist landmarks in the nation, and this region is known as the “Garden of Methodism.”



Working the Land & Water

The fertile lands, rich waters, and gentle climate of this region supported successive populations whose wealth grew as they learned to exploit these resources. Today's economy and unique Chesapeake Bay cultures still rely on a foundation built from natural resources, and resonate also to influences well beyond the Bay.

Harvest at Tilghman Island in the 1990's

A worker unloads fresh-caught oysters for processing at Tilghman Island, now an increasingly rare sight around the bay as the native Chesapeake Bay oyster struggles for survival. The Chesapeake Bay region enjoys a rare combination of natural resources that can support both excellent farming and great fishing. (Photo courtesy Talbot County Tourism)

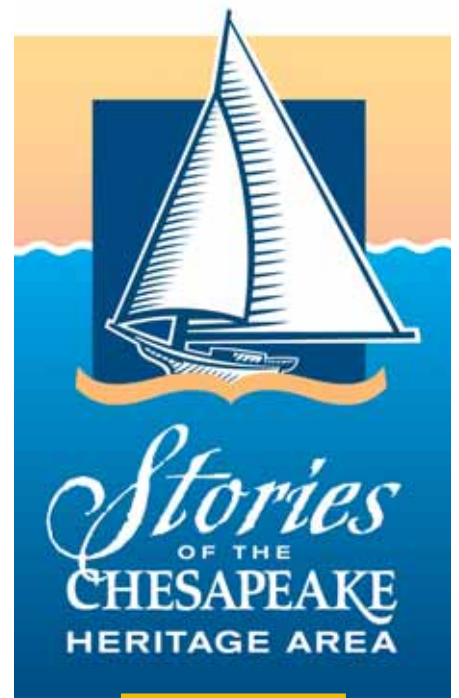
Destination Eastern Shore! Travel & Transportation Past & Present

If this is a landscape whose destiny is determined by the Chesapeake Bay, it is also a landscape shaped by the history of transportation and the ever-greater access afforded by a succession of travel modes.



Oxford-Bellevue Ferry

The privately operated Oxford-Bellevue ferry catches the late afternoon sun at its Oxford berth, resting in its rhythms back and forth to the far shore, visible here a short distance away. Simply getting across rivers was a challenge for land travelers in the early days - mill dams dictated where slaves fleeing to freedom along the Underground Railroad could go, for example, and George Washington sailed along the bay from Mount Vernon to Rock Hall to take the higher ground north to Philadelphia. (Photo by Kate Wise)



The Heritage Area's Roles in Fostering Regional Linkages

- Leading a regional signage plan
- Developing a system for visitor orientation at designated sites across the four counties and later, working with towns and selected villages to create local visitor centers
- Creating walking and driving tours
- Supporting scenic byways and their management groups
- Fostering collaboration among county parks and recreation departments on regional planning for recreational opportunities

Key Interpretive Topics:

1. African American Heritage
2. Agriculture
3. Archeology
4. Colonial & Early American Heritage
5. Maritime Heritage
6. Nature
7. Recreation
8. Religion
9. Small Towns
10. Transportation

Chesapeake Heritage Area Certified! *Cont'd from Page 1*

Other communities continue to work on amending their comprehensive plans to add the state-approved heritage area management plan.

All four counties and all towns are part of the Recognized Heritage Area, which is the region to be promoted by the state to visitors.

The heritage area focuses on heritage tourism and stewardship of the many historic, natural, recreational, and cultural resources that comprise “Maryland’s Eastern Shore Experience.”

“We are pleased to gain this final status, which confers economic advantages on our many partners in this region,” said Al Silverstein, president of Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc. (ESHI), the nonprofit management entity for the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area.

Mr. Silverstein, who is also president and chief executive officer of the Talbot County Chamber of Commerce, added, “State certification confirms that this part of Maryland’s Eastern Shore is a major player in the highly successful effort across the state to create sustainable economic development through heritage tourism.”

“The leadership of the four counties served by this region has been critical to our success, and we also appreciate the many communities, organizations, businesses, and individuals who joined this exceptional team effort,” said Elizabeth Watson, the heritage area’s executive director and lead planner since work began on the project in 1997. “This region has always cared for its heritage, and we look forward to bringing more outside financial support, promotion, and technical assistance to the work we all share in making sure this heritage lasts for hundreds of years to come.”



Stitching Together a Regional Visitor Experience

One of the key opportunities in the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Areas is to foster more explicit connections across the four counties—physically via trails or tour loops, and experientially via interpretive themes, cooperative interpretation, or special event experiences.

Physical linkages include wayfinding and visitor orientation, roads and highways, and recreational linkages. Recreational opportunities are especially rich in the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area and are to be an explicit subject of heritage area planning for the visitor experience wherever possible.

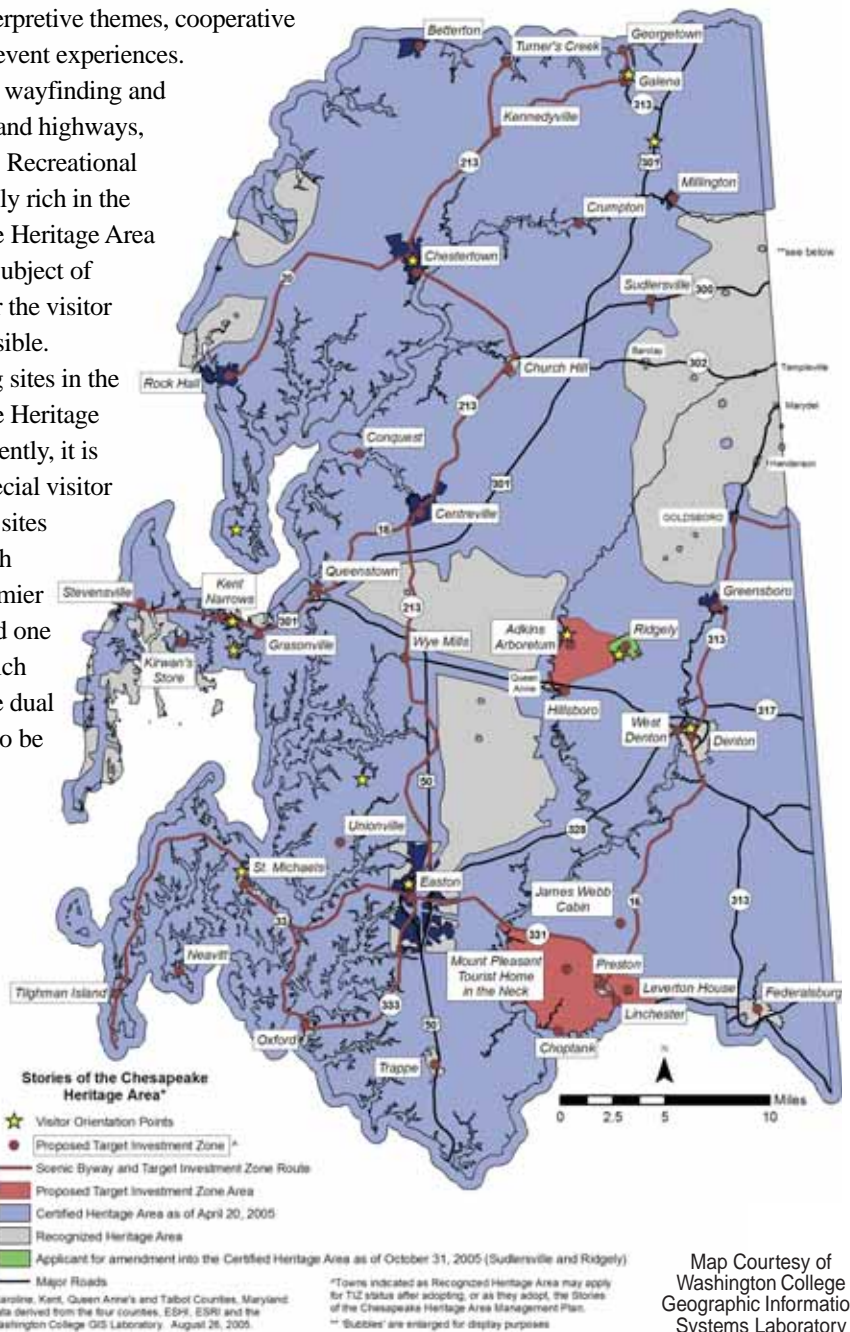
With enough existing sites in the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area that are open sufficiently, it is not necessary to build special visitor reception and orientation sites (see map). Moreover, each county possesses one premier visitor site for history, and one for natural resources—which can help to emphasize the dual nature of the experience to be encouraged here.

Municipalities not now served by visitor centers should consider ways to establish these over the long term.

One of ESHI’s most important interpretive activities is to be the creation of driving tours that highlight the beautiful and historic landscape of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, followed over time by the construction of outdoor interpretive signage and pulloffs. Walking tours should be part of the early investment of the heritage area.

The experience of water is as important as enjoying the land here.

Finding ways to encourage visitors to



enjoy water-based activities is critical to the long-term development of a high-quality visitor experience. For non-boating water access experiences, town waterfronts and dockside restaurants are key.

The Eastern Shore is already a popular venue for bicycling, which frequently occurs on country roads where narrow, winding roads, often without shoulders, present safety

challenges for both cyclists and automobile drivers. As roads are improved in the region, accommodating bicycle use should be a conscious element of planning and design. A regional bicycle-pedestrian safety plan, using federal funds, could provide guidance in sorting out the possibilities and options for expanding bicycling opportunities.



Heritage Tourism:

An Opportunity for Sustainable Growth

Each attraction, event, and amenity is a tourism product that can contribute to the visitor's experience. A good mixture of attractions, large and small, together with a good mixture of visitor amenities, attracts larger audiences. The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area will help to integrate the various tourism products

within Caroline, Kent Queen Anne's and Talbot counties to produce a great visitor experience.

In the process, residents benefit – from businesses that would not otherwise be here, from additional investment in educational sites and programs, from economic activity that cannot be exported overseas. Heritage tourism is already big business in some parts of the heritage area - and across the entire region approximately 725 businesses and attractions are reliant at least in part on tourism. The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, working hand in hand with the county tourism offices, will work to improve the visibility of the heritage area, market it as a mix of attractions, unite business owners and attractions in creating the Stories of the Chesapeake “brand,” and minimize the negative impacts of tourism.



Tourism Tax Revenues in the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area – FY04

	Hotel/Motel (H/T) Tax	Amusement & Admission (A&A) Tax	Direct Tourism Revenues (H/T+ A&A)	Total Tourism Tax Revenues ¹
	(in thousands)			(millions)
Caroline²	\$0	\$2.6	\$2.6	\$0.2
Kent	\$106.4	51.4	157.8	\$2
Queen Anne's	196.3	174.3	370.6	\$2.4
Talbot	568	94.8	662.8	\$4.8
AREA TOTAL	\$870.7	\$323.2	\$1,194	\$9.4
STATE TOTALS:				
	(in millions)			
	\$74.9	\$50	\$124.98	\$335.3

¹Total Tourism Tax Revenue includes a portion of local taxes such as property tax, income tax, and sales tax generated by local tourism businesses plus hotel/motel and amusement and admission taxes.

²Caroline County's hotel/motel tax began after FY04. Sources: Maryland Office of Tourism Development, Comptroller of the Treasury, & Dept. of Legislative Services, 2005

Targeted Investment

The economic activity associated with sustainably designed heritage tourism creates business opportunities for expansion and development, job growth, and a stronger tax base.

Under the Maryland's program for heritage areas, “Target Investment Zones” are sites and areas where significant private investment in support of heritage tourism is to be encouraged. (The use of the word “zone” has nothing to do with local zoning ordinances.) The program requires that TIZs must be able to “encourage demonstrable results and return on public investment within a relatively short period of time”—generally five years. Certain financial benefits available from the state of Maryland in support of heritage areas are available only to projects within Target Investment Zones (page 3).

In the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, the strongest TIZ candidates will be those that function as nodes of interpretation, commerce, and transportation and those sites that build “critical mass” for the visitor experience. Sites within towns and cities have an advantage, because they already serve as nodes of economic activity, and they are well connected by roads and waterways. The heritage area's plan lists Proposed Target Investment Zones that are expected to be so designated over the next ten years (see map opposite).

The Heritage Area's Roles in Supporting Heritage Tourism

- Working with the county tourism offices on regional initiatives
- Offering training and information to business owners and employees, and working with business groups to keep their members informed
- Developing of a state-of-the-art web site, a regional brochure, and a unified regional calendar of activities
- Leading a branding strategy that enlists local tourism businesses and producers of local specialty items and foods in a special “logo” program
- Technical assistance for communities to develop the expertise and plans to minimize tourism impacts, including standards and a guide for bus tour operators



And Our Mystery Photo is...



Chestertown's Custom House!

Visit the basement of Chestertown's Custom House (1752) to see this “secure space,” thought by some to be a jail, but most knowledgeable observers believe it to be a storage area for valuable goods. Washington College now owns the building, which houses the college's Public Archeology Laboratory, open to visitors most Saturdays during spring, summer, and fall.



It's easy to make friends at the Adkins Arboretum!

Managing the Heritage Area

Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc., is a public-private nonprofit organization created in 2000 especially to investigate the heritage area opportunity offered by the state, undertake the management plan, and manage the state-certified heritage area with Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties. It will do business as "Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area."

The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority requires that management plans describe how the heritage area will implement strategies for interpretation, heritage tourism, linkage, targeted investment, and stewardship. This description must address governance and staffing and set forth a strategy for achieving financial sustainability within three to five years. The final chapter of *The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area Management Plan* addresses these issues. It also describes how the heritage area will work with *partners*: local governments and their agencies, nonprofit and civic organizations, educational institutions, and for-profit businesses and the associations that represent their interests.

The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area occupies a unique niche among regional nonprofit

organizations because of its governmental relationships. Eight seats on its board of directors are named by the county governments, and the plan is adopted by counties and towns with comprehensive planning and zoning responsibilities. Moreover, the counties and some towns have supported ESHI financially. These relationships confer a large obligation on the heritage area to serve local governments.

One service is simply to act regionally to start up this heritage area, a more efficient approach than each local government undertaking heritage tourism initiatives alone. Other ways to serve local governments will evolve as all parties explore the new possibilities that this plan represents.

The Stories of the Chesapeake Certified Heritage Area covers 1200 square miles, four counties, 21 incorporated municipalities, and a host of unincorporated settlements. Founded as Kent County in 1642, which was divided over time into Talbot County (1662), Queen Anne's County (1706), and Caroline County (1773), 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 120,000 people reside here, and approximately 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.

Setting Priorities

The heritage area will first focus on interpretation, tourism product development and promotion, and other activities that will make the heritage area concept come alive. This will help to lay a strong foundation for longer range accomplishments in fundraising, economic development, and program development.

Other ideas are set forth in the plan that should be taken up by partners, singly or in groups, working independently of the heritage area or with its encouragement. This plan describes the possibilities, the roles, and the resources that exist and what might be accomplished if we can achieve synergy among various actors and ideas.

While the individual chapters in the heritage area plan suggest levels of priority for various activities, this is just to provide a general sense of the work anticipated. From year to year, as the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area establishes its budget and work program, the actual priorities will be identified and refined.



Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc. 2004-2005

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Become a Member!

Yes! I want to join Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc.

- Individual \$20
- Household \$30
- Nonprofit Partner \$50
- Corporate Partner \$50
- Candleholder \$100
- Torchbearer \$250
- Lighthouse Keeper \$500
- Keeper of the Flame \$1000
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*Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation.
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