

# Religious Freedom Byway Management Plan

*The Beginnings of Religious Freedom in America*



October 2008

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Prepared for:

Charles and St. Mary's Counties in Maryland  
and

Maryland Office of Tourism Development  
Maryland State Highway Administration

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*with the assistance of*  
Religious Freedom Byway Advisory Committee

October 2008

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# Religious Freedom Byway

## Introduction



*St. Clements Island celebrates the birthplace of Maryland*

This chapter of the Byway Management Plan summarizes the purpose of the plan and the process that was utilized to develop the plan.

### **1.1 The Religious Freedom Byway**

The Religious Freedom Byway presents the story of America's First Right and the quest for religious tolerance in Colonial America. Among the four earliest English settlements along the east coast of North America, the original vision for the colony introduced the concepts of religious tolerance and the separation of church and state to North America. Though overwhelmed at the time by religious rivalry and conflict, these concepts later became founding principles of the United States Constitution, documented in the First Amendment.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Plan**

The purpose of the Byway Management Plan is not regulatory. Instead, the planning effort is designed to help each county in its efforts to promote the rich historical and cultural legacy that emanated from the first effort to free religion from government in America. Much of this legacy can still be found throughout the corridor. The plan is designed to identify more compelling ways in which the story can be told in order to draw more visitors to the area. More than just drawing visitors, the plan also

calls for new and innovative ways to preserve the legacy, while at the same time developing sustainable tourism opportunities based on that heritage.

The plan is also designed to serve as the basis for submitting the route for nomination as a National Scenic Byway through the Federal Highway Administration's America's Byways Program. The plan meets the fourteen requirements of a corridor management plan as spelled out in the May 18, 1995 Interim Policy published in the Federal Register.

The plan is a statement about how the partnerships between local government, state agencies, civic organizations, residents and the owners and operators of historic sites and visitor attractions will work together to achieve the byway's goals. The implementation of the plan is dependent upon finding new sources of funding to support the management activities recommended in the plan.

### **What is a Byway Management Plan?**

The plan is a written document in which the sponsor describes the goals, strategies and responsibilities for preserving, maintaining and enhancing a byway's most valuable qualities. It is developed cooperatively with all those who have an interest in the future of the byway corridor, and includes both a long-term vision for what the byway may become and a short-term action plan.

The preparation of the Byway Management Plan is the first step in coordinating Smart Growth Initiatives and creating a partnership with all federal, state and local agencies and programs to preserve, maintain and enhance the Byway's character-defining features.



*Preservation of Southern Maryland's tobacco heritage is a strong priority in the region*



## Why a “National Scenic Byway”?

Under the National Scenic Byways Program, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their intrinsic qualities. The Federal Highway Administration promotes the collection as America’s Byways®. The designation provides additional opportunities for heritage-based tourism development including funding opportunities for preservation and enhancement projects. Maryland has three byways currently designated under the program as National Scenic Byways: the Historic National Road, Frederick County’s Catoctin Mountain Byway and the Eastern Shore’s Chesapeake Country Byway.

When determining if a state-designated byway meets the requirements for designation as a National Scenic Byway, the intrinsic qualities of that byway must be evaluated. The National Scenic Byways Program identifies six different categories of intrinsic qualities: scenic, cultural, historic, recreational, archaeological, and natural. In order for a byway to meet national designation criteria it must have at least one quality that is considered regionally significant. If two intrinsic qualities are deemed significant on a national

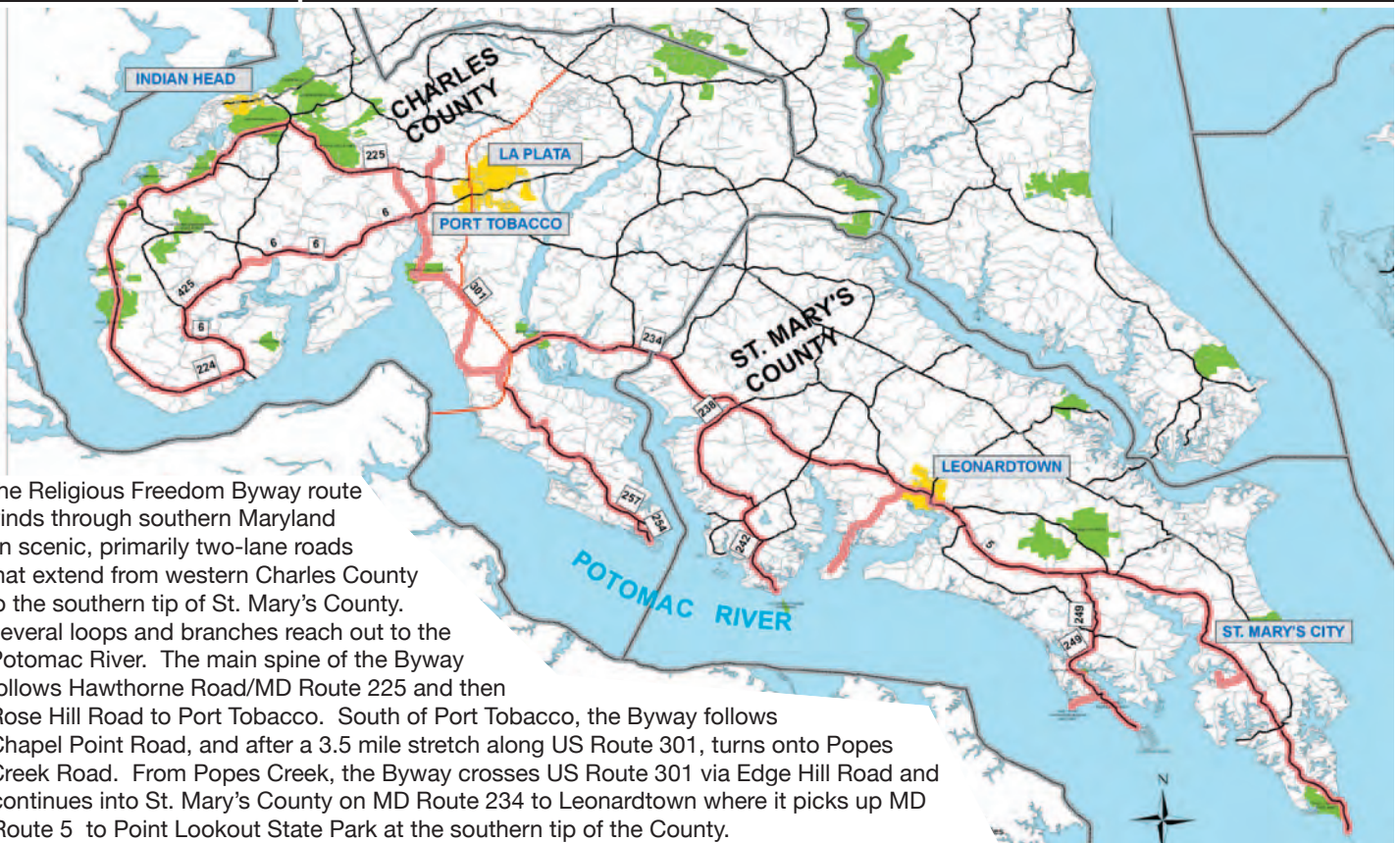
level, the Byway qualifies for the All-American Road designation.

The Religious Freedom Byway has nationally significant historic qualities in that it presents the story of America’s founding as it unfolded on the shores of the Potomac River in Southern Maryland, one of the nation’s earliest colonial settlements. Southern Maryland’s unique colonial story began with the possibility that life in the New World presented significant opportunities for freedom and prosperity. In taking their chances on that possibility, thousands of individuals came to Maryland’s shores under varying circumstances. The realities they faced, the struggles they endured, and the lives they shaped are stories of our nation’s fragile and tenuous beginnings and help us understand who we are today.

## 1.3 Planning Context and Process

In 1999, the Maryland State Highway Administration designated 139 miles of roadway in Southern Maryland as a State Scenic Byway. The byway follows scenic corridors bordering the Potomac River and its tributaries from northern Charles County to southern St. Mary’s County. Named the Religious

### Corridor Location Map





*The Religious Freedom Byway Management Team toured the corridor to identify issues and opportunities for management*

Freedom Byway, it was designated for its scenic, cultural, historic, recreational, and natural qualities. In 2006, St. Mary's & Charles Counties received a grant from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in the amount of \$150,400 to develop a Byway Management Plan (BMP) for the Religious Freedom Byway.

Over the past year, a team of landscape architects, planners, engineers, and preservation consultants have been working with an Advisory Committee representing various state and local governments and civic groups to develop the Byway Management Plan. The goal of the effort is to nominate the Religious Freedom Byway for designation as a National Scenic Byway through the Federal Highway Administration's America's Byways Program. A Byway Management Plan along with the demonstration of public support for the scenic byway is required for nomination. In addition, the Byway must be ready for visitors.

An Advisory Committee was formed to assist in the development of the management plan. The Religious Freedom Byway Advisory Committee represents a cross-section of those people that live or work along the Byway, those that are responsible for its management, and those with extensive knowledge of the history of the area. The Byway Advisory Committee has:

- assisted in the formulation of a vision, goals and objectives for the plan;
- provided information to the planning team about important features and points of interest along the Byway;

- assisted in the development of strategies to preserve, maintain, and enhance important features and to help determine how best to take advantage of the opportunities;
- made recommendations regarding how the plan will be implemented; and
- made a recommendation to pursue designation as a National Byway.

The Religious Freedom Byway Advisory Committee met seven times over a one-year period at different locations throughout the corridor. These Advisory Committee meetings were open to the public. In addition, two public meetings were held: the first to provide more information to the public about the planning effort, and to review the plan's vision, goals and objectives; and a second meeting to review the plan's recommended strategies for preserving, maintaining and enhancing the travel route as an important gateway to Southern Maryland's heritage and ecotourism opportunities.

The following Advisory Committee meetings took place to assist in the development of the plan:

- #1 What are the Vision and Goals for the Byway?  
JUNE 26, 2007  
Public Meeting - Are we headed in the right direction? JULY 31, 2007
- #2 Where are the special places along the Byway and how can they best be preserved? AUG. 28, 2007
- #3 How can we enhance the Byway and make it more attractive? SEPT. 25, 2007
- #4 What is the best way to tell the Byway's stories of Religious Tolerance and Freedom? OCT. 23, 2007
- #5 How do we encourage visitors to stop in the towns and businesses along the Byway? NOV. 27, 2007
- #6 How can we make sure the Byway is both safe and attractive for travelers? JAN. 29, 2008  
Public Meeting - Did we get the plan right? FEB. 27-28, 2008
- #7 Who will be responsible for implementing the plan? MAR. 27, 2008

The result of this extensive outreach is a true grass-roots planning effort that reflects the sense of the communities along the Byway about how best to preserve, maintain, and enhance the route as it gains designation as a National Scenic Byway.



## ***1.4 Ongoing Public Involvement***

The Byway Management Plan is intended to be more than just a snapshot of the planning process to date and the results of the planning effort. Instead, it is intended to be a working document that provides step-by-step recommendations for how to transform a little-used state scenic byway into one of the primary spines for heritage tourism in Southern Maryland.

The work of the Advisory Committee will continue as the plan unfolds. Advisory Committee members will provide input on the more detailed planning efforts needed for wayfinding and interpretation and provide a distinct voice for the Byway on matters relating to its future preservation and enhancement. The Plan and the Advisory Committee have become the voice for the Byway, speaking out on its behalf.

Chapter 6, Plan Implementation, addresses the ongoing management of the Byway including the steps necessary to create a permanent management entity. In the short-term, Charles and St. Mary's Counties, along with their agency partners will continue to work together to implement the plan and utilize the existing Advisory Committee to continue their role in representing the public interests in the development and implementation of the Plan.

# Religious Freedom Byway

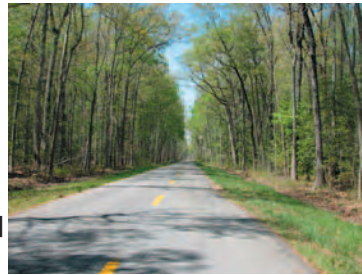
## The Byway Today

This section of the Byway Management Plan defines the Byway corridor and describes the travel route, the existing facilities and services, the roadway conditions, and the currently planned and programmed projects along the Byway.

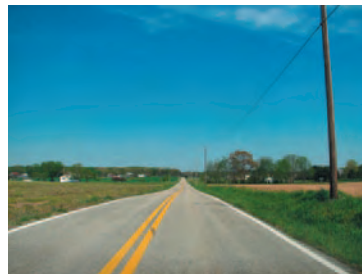
### 2.1 Defining the Byway Corridor

For the purposes of preserving, maintaining, and enhancing the travel experience along the Byway, its corridor includes the travel route and the lands and places associated with that route as defined below:

- The road itself – includes the travel route and associated right-of-way.
- The view from the road – incorporating the adjacent farms, forests and townscapes.
- Places to visit along the way (that are related to the Byway theme) – including any site open to the public that can be easily found without trailblazing signs.
- Resources associated with the corridor – including parks, greenways, public lands, historic districts, trails, water trails, and wildlife sanctuaries that intersect the Byway.



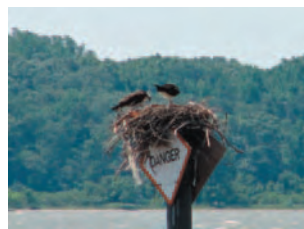
*Tree-lined MD 224, Nanjemoy Loop*



*Open views along Popes Creek Road*



*Chapel reconstruction, St. Mary's City*



*Nesting on the Potomac*

### Getting to the Byway

Given its central location in the mid-Atlantic region, the Religious Freedom Byway is within driving distance of several cities, including Washington, D.C., Baltimore, MD, Annapolis, MD, and Richmond, VA. (See [Map 1, Byway Access and Interpretive Sites](#)).

**From Richmond, VA, and points south:** From Virginia, cross over the Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge on Crain Highway/Blue Star Memorial

Highway/US 301 to reach southern Charles County. Once over the bridge, there are several options for accessing the Byway: (1) follow US 301 approximately 1.5 miles and turn right onto Rock Point Road south to Cobb Island; (2) follow US 301 approximately 1.5 miles and turn left onto Edge Hill Road, which takes visitors north toward Port Tobacco via Popes Creek and Chapel Point State Park; or (3) continue north on US 301 to Budds Creek Road/MD234 to continue south toward Allens Fresh and into St. Mary's County.

### From Washington, D.C., and points northwest:

Take the Capital Beltway (Interstate 95/495) to Indian Head Highway/MD 210. Follow MD 210 for approximately 19 miles to Hawthorne Road/MD 225. From Hawthorne Road, visitors can turn right on Chicamuxen Road/MD 224 to tour the Nanjemoy Loop or continue on Hawthorne Road toward Rose Hill and the Thomas Stone National Historic Site.

**From Baltimore, MD, and points north:** Follow Interstate 97 south to US 301. From US 301, visitors can head west on Hawthorne Road to the Mount Carmel spur and then continue on Hawthorne to the Thomas Stone National Historic Site and the Nanjemoy Loop or take US 301 further and connect to the Byway via Port Tobacco Road/MD Route 6, Budds Creek Road/MD 234 to St. Mary's County, or Rock Point Road to Cobb Island.

**From Calvert County, MD:** From Hallowing Point Road/MD 231, take the Patuxent River Bridge into St. Mary's County, where Hallowing Point Road becomes Prince Frederick Road. Visitors can follow MD 231 to Trinity Church Road/MD 232 and on to Budds Creek Road/MD 234. Alternatively, from MD 231, visitors can take MD 5 south to Charlotte Hall, where they can stop at the visitors center before continuing on to the Byway on MD 236.

If coming from further south in Calvert County, take Louis L. Goldstein Highway/MD 4 across the Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge. In St. Mary's County MD 4 becomes Patuxent Beach Road. MD 4 continues all the way to the Byway, connecting to Point Lookout Road/MD 5 just south of Leonardtown.

Those visiting from further away can fly into any one of the area's major airports, including Reagan National Airport in Arlington, VA; Dulles International Airport in Dulles, VA; Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport in Baltimore, MD; or Richmond International Airport in Richmond, VA, and then drive to the Byway following the directions above.

### The Byway's Regions

Traveling along the Byway route, visitors experience a variety of land uses, views, terrain and roadway features. Consequently, management strategies must vary in order to respond to the specific conditions along different sections of the Byway. In order to respond appropriately, the Byway has been divided into the following sections:

**Nanjemoy Loop:** This segment, which includes MD 224, MD 6 and MD 425, encircles the western peninsula of Charles County. Following the Potomac River as it curves around the County, the Nanjemoy Loop features some of the Byway's most significant natural resources. The loop is dotted with state parks and wildlife management areas that contain mature hardwood forests and marshlands rich in native plant species and wildlife. Most of these protected lands are located along the northern and western portions of the loop. However, river views are prevalent throughout.



*Marshland along the Nanjemoy Loop*

**Port Tobacco to Allen's Fresh:** This segment includes Chapel Point Road to Popes Creek Road and on to Budds Creek Road. Between Chapel Point Road and Popes Creek Road, and again between Popes Creek Road and Budds Creek Road, the Byway follows US 301 for a short distance. These stretches on US 301 separate three distinctive sites along this segment of the Byway: Chapel Point State Park and the scenic views from St. Ignatius Church; views of the Potomac at Popes Creek; and



*View from St. Ignatius at Chapel Point*

the natural resources in the Zekiah Swamp Natural Environment Area.

### Budds Creek Road:

East of Allen's Fresh to MD 5, Budds Creek Road passes over gently rolling terrain and through a primarily wooded landscape. Mature trees approach the road's edge, but wide shoulders create an open roadway, preventing the sense of enclosure experienced on the Nanjemoy Loop. Still, occasional farm parcels create an even greater sense of spaciousness that contrasts with the wooded stretches. The cleared land offers expansive pastoral views that extend to distant hedge rows.



*View of Zekiah Swamp from Budds Creek Road*

**Leonardtown:** From the intersection of MD 234 and MD 5 through Leonardtown to MD 4, the Byway route is heavily developed, creating a stark contrast between this segment and those before and after



*St. Mary's County Historical Society, Leonardtown*

it. A residential subdivision at MD 5 is followed by a stretch of shopping centers and fast food restaurants. At Washington Street, the Byway passes through downtown Leonardtown, the largest incorporated town along the Byway.

**Callaway and environs:** Along Point Lookout Road/MD 5, from MD 4 just beyond Callaway, the Byway is primarily rural, with expansive farmland views. These views are periodically interrupted by small shopping centers or other commercial properties. Such development is particularly concentrated in Callaway at the intersection of MD 5 and Piney Point Road.

### St. Mary's to Point

**Lookout:** Along the southern-most segment of the Byway, the terrain is flat and the land use is primarily agricultural.



*Historic St. Mary's City*



Occasional forested areas interrupt expansive pastoral views, and development is limited to the few rural villages along this segment.

### The Byway Route

The Religious Freedom Byway winds through southern Maryland on scenic, primarily two-lane roads. Several of these roads come together to create a 73-mile spine that extends from western Charles County to the southern tip of St. Mary's County. In Charles County, this spine follows Hawthorne Road/MD 225 and then Rose Hill Road to Port Tobacco. South of Port Tobacco, the Byway follows Chapel Point Road, and after a 3.5 mile stretch along US 301, turns onto Popes Creek Road. From Popes Creek, the Byway crosses US 301 via Edge Hill Road and continues into St. Mary's County on Budds Creek Road/MD 234. The spine follows MD 234 to Leonardtown where it picks up Point Lookout Road/MD 5 and continues on MD 5 to Point Lookout State Park at the southern tip of the county.

In addition to scenic views and points of interest along the spine, several historic and natural resources are located just off the Byway. Six tours that branch off from the Byway spine lead visitors to these sites, covering an additional 116 miles and offering a more comprehensive byway experience.

### Nanjemoy Loop –

This loop encircles the western portion of Charles County, following the Potomac River as it curves around the County from Chapel Point to Indian Head. The route follows MD 224 through Smallwood State Park and Purse State Park to MD Route 6. From MD 6, the loop turns onto MD 425, passing Friendship Farm Park before returning to MD 6 via Durham Church Road.



*Old Durham Church, Nanjemoy Loop*

**Mount Carmel Branch** – The Mount Carmel Branch is a short tour that takes visitors to the Mount Carmel Monastery. From Port Tobacco, visitors drive north on Valley Road and continue on Mitchell Road until turning right onto Mount Carmel Road.



*Mount Carmel Monastery*

**Cobb Island Branch** – Also in Charles County, the Cobb Island Branch follows Rock Point Road/MD 257 past Old Christ Church and down to Cobb Island.



*Old Christ Church, Rock Point Road*

**St. Clement's Island Branch** – The route to St. Clement's Island follows Maddox Road/MD 238 to Colton Point Road/MD 242. At the end of this branch visitors can learn about colonial settlement in Maryland at the St. Clements Island Museum or take a water taxi to the island for hiking, fishing or picnicking.



*Coltons Point*

**Newtowne Neck Branch** – Just north of Leonardtown, Newtowne Neck Road/MD 243 heads south, leading visitors to St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, the oldest Roman Catholic church in the state.<sup>1</sup>



*Newtowne Manor at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church*

### Piney Point Branch –

At Callaway, visitors can turn off of MD 5 and take Piney Point Road/MD 249 down to St. George Island. On the way, they can stop at the Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park, just off of MD 249 on Lighthouse Road.



*Island Creek on St. George Island*

### Extending the Byway

Consideration should be given to extending the Byway northward to Marshall Hall and the southern tip of Piscataway State Park as a gateway site. This would provide access to the Bryans Road area which has numerous visitor services and amenities.

## The Byway's Immediate Roadside Area

Managing the Byway requires consideration of both the road itself, and the associated right-of-way managed by the State Highway Administration or one of the Counties. Roadside issues that need to be considered as part of the Byway Management Plan include maintaining the quality of the roadside character and appearance, tree preservation, agricultural land preservation, agricultural use (right-to-farm), access management, on- and off-premise signs, wayfinding, context sensitive roadside design/solutions, etc.

For the purpose of the Byway Management Plan and byway designation the immediate roadside area shall be defined as:

- Existing road surface and right-of-way
- All parcels of land with immediate frontage and access along the Byway route
- All parcels of open farmland adjacent to the Byway (regardless of whether the parcel has frontage)

## Views from the Byway

The experience of traveling along the Byway is also influenced by its views. The Byway Management Plan needs to address how changes to those views over time will be managed to maintain the quality of the travel experience. For the purpose of this Plan, management approaches will utilize existing and available preservation, conservation and land use tools that are identified in each County's Comprehensive Plans.

There are four different conditions along the Byway that should be considered when defining the extent of the Byway corridor's width:

- Closed-canopy forest sections narrowly define the Byway on both sides, especially in the Nanjemoy area. However, if these forests were to be removed it would greatly change the experience of driving along these parts of the Byway.
- Built up areas are currently found in only a few places along the Byway, mostly at intersections and strips along MD 234 and MD 5, the main spine of the Byway, approaching Leonardtown and in Leonardtown. However, even these few



*Closed-canopy along the Nanjemoy Loop*

areas provide a stark contrast to the rest of the Byway, and point out how important it is to plan development even in relatively rural areas, least the rural and charming character be spoiled. One only needs to drive on Three Notch Road that runs just north and parallel to much of the Byway to see the drastic difference in driving experience that widespread sprawling commercial development can create.

- Expansive river and bay views are found in several places along the Byway, in some places extending for many miles out across the water and into Virginia. These special views, noted on the corridor definition maps, should be recognized as part of the corridor width so that future large-scale projects such as bridges, power plants, wind farms, or large-scale electrical transmission lines will consider these views in future planning and regulatory approvals.
- Pastoral views of barns, farmhouses, tree-lined roads and hearty crop fields are found throughout the Byway, interspersed by woodlands and wetlands. The history of these farms is integral to the culture of Southern Maryland and their preservation is vital to the beauty and experience of the Byway.



*Commercial corridor near Leonardtown*



*Chesapeake Bay view at Point Lookout*



*Agriculture land, St. Mary's County*

The corridor definition should be responsive to all of these conditions, therefore, the width of the corridor shall include:

- Any lands or waters that can be seen from the Byway
- Any land or waters that can be seen from a historic site that is directly related to the theme of the Byway as defined above (places to visit along the Byway)



[Map 2, St. Mary's County Recreational Areas and Scenic Views](#) and [Map 3, Charles County Recreational Areas and Scenic Views](#) includes the locations of many of the views found along the Byway.

One reason to incorporate the views from the travel route as part of the corridor definition is to provide documentation for public benefits of any future conservation easements (see Chapter 4). It should be noted that the Federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires proof that any tax benefit associated with a conservation easement have a conservation purpose<sup>2</sup>. The Byway Management Plan will need to establish that public purpose so that individual property owners can use that definition when submitting documentation to the IRS. Conserving these views will help maintain the rural character of the overall landscape, minimize intrusions (such as cell towers, power plants, utility lines, etc.), help preserve agricultural land and active farms, and help reduce the demands for public services, such as schools and transportation. (Rural land has fewer children and cars.)

Given the conditions along the Byway, it is not possible to draw a specific boundary or width for the corridor. Instead, the Plan recommends using these specific corridor criteria to account for the dynamic nature of land uses along the Byway. For example, if a property owner wants to donate a conservation easement, he or she simply will need to document that the land in question is visible from the Byway route.

### **Related Corridors, Heritage Areas, and Regional Trails**

Southern Maryland is rich in history, natural beauty and recreational opportunities; consequently, several trails, heritage areas, and travel corridors intersect or are within close proximity of the Byway. These relationships further enhance the visitor experience along the Religious Freedom Byway.

**Southern Maryland Heritage Area (SMHA):** This heritage area evolved from the *Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Development Program* created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1996, and includes Charles, St. Mary's and Calvert Counties. The area "encompasses an abundance of historic, cultural, natural and recreational resources reflecting distinctive rural landscapes and historical development along the

shorelines of tidal creeks, rivers, and bays" (SMHA Management Plan 2003). The SMHA promotes these assets through travel itineraries, bicycle and driving tour maps, event calendars and visitor's guides.

**Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network:** This is a network of over 150 parks, wildlife refuges, museums and water trails within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The network is coordinated – and ten of the network's sites managed – by the National Park Service. Other gateway sites are managed by local, state and federal government agencies as well as not-for-profit and other non-governmental organizations.

**Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail:** Part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways, this trail is actually a series of water trails that trace the voyages of Captain John Smith up the Chesapeake Bay and along the Potomac, Patuxent, Rappahannock, York and James Rivers. The trails take visitors through marshes, along tributaries and into quiet bays and coves. Interactive buoys along the route, as well as maps and guides, help visitors navigate the trails.

**Civil War Trails – John Wilkes Booth's Escape Route:** This route follows John Wilkes Booth's flight from the Ford's Theatre through Prince George's and Charles Counties in Maryland, across the Potomac River and into Virginia. The trail is marked with interpretive signage, and the Maryland-based Surrat Society publishes maps and guides. Bus tours are also available through the Surrat Society and the Smithsonian.

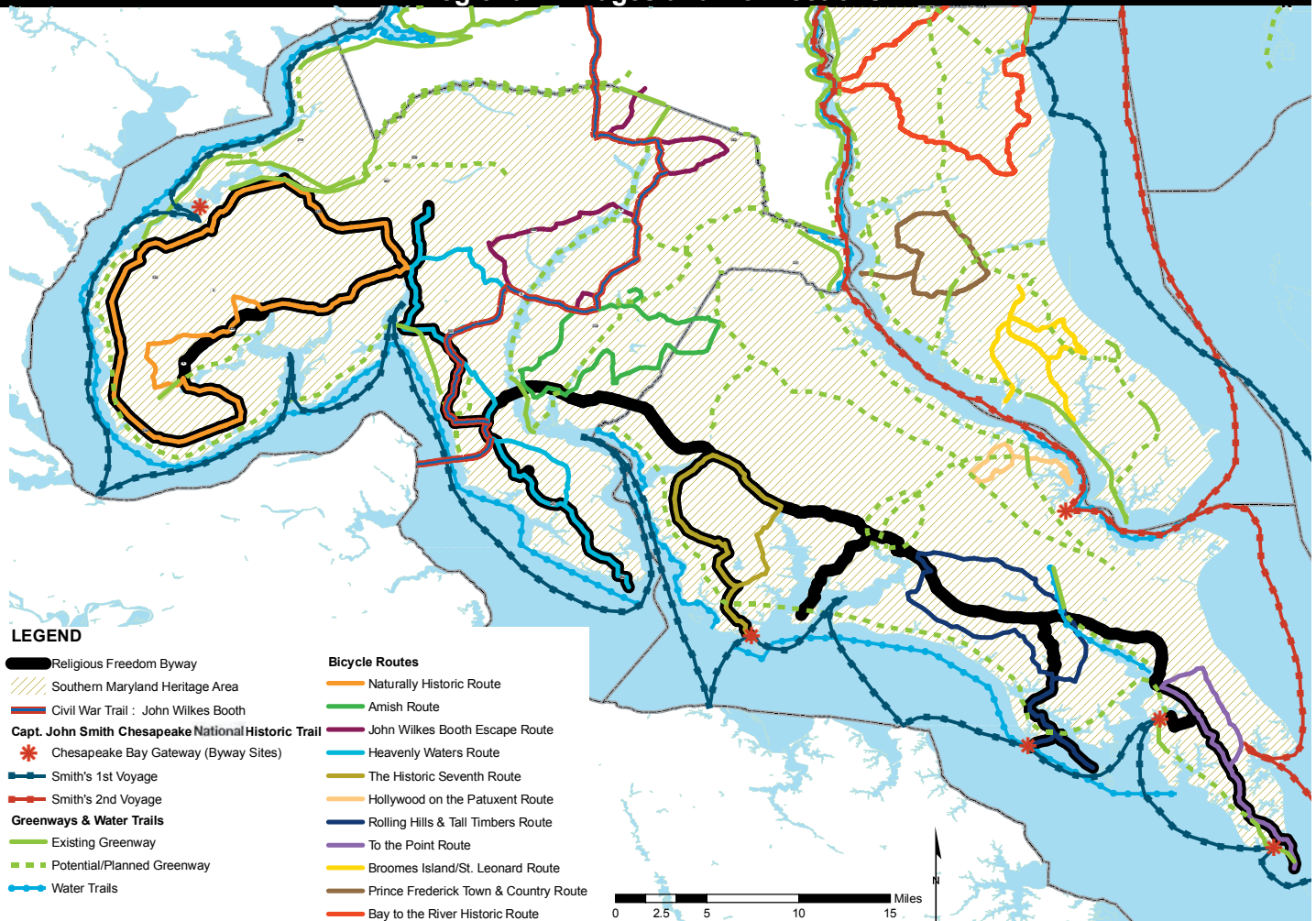
**Bicycle Routes:** The Southern Maryland Travel and Tourism Committee publishes a map featuring established bicycle routes in Charles, Calvert and St. Mary's Counties. There are four routes in each county, and of the eight in Charles and St. Mary's Counties, six of them intersect or follow the Religious Freedom Byway. These include the Naturally Historic Route, the Heavenly Waters Route, the Amish Route, the Historic Seventh Route, the Rolling Hills and Tall Timbers Route, and the To the Point Route.

**Maryland Greenways, Water Trails, and Green Infrastructure:** Sponsored by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Maryland Greenways Commission seeks to

“establish an interconnected, statewide network of greenways and land and water trails that preserve, protect and enhance Maryland’s valuable natural treasures and provide opportunities for people to enjoy them” (<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/greenways/commission.html>). Existing and proposed trails create a network throughout the state, including Charles and St. Mary’s Counties. Whenever possible, the Greenways and Water Trails Program teams with local governments, citizens groups, businesses and others to coordinate projects, collect data and secure funding necessary for the implementation of the program.

**Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail:** The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail is a network of existing and proposed hiking trails traversing Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., Virginia and Maryland and extending from the Chesapeake Bay to the Alleghany Highlands. Several hiking itineraries have already been established in Southern Maryland. These include the following: (1) Point Lookout to St. Mary’s City; (2) St. Mary’s City to Leonardtown; (3) Leonardtown to Chapel Point State Park; (4) Chapel Point State Park to Smallwood State Park; (5) Smallwood State Park to Piscataway Park; and (6) National Colonial Farm to Oxen Hill Farm.

### Regional Linkages and Connections



## 2.2 Existing Facilities and Services

Visitor facilities along the Byway are well-spaced, within a short drive of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area, and are well-signed through SHA and MOTD's recently installed Tourist Areas and Corridors Signing Program (TAC).

### Existing Visitor Attractions

Given the historical significance of Southern Maryland and the unique natural environments nestled along the shores of the Potomac River and its tributaries, it is not surprising that the Religious Freedom Byway offers numerous attractions for visitors to enjoy. These attractions include historical, cultural, natural and recreational sites that have been designated "Anchor Sites" or "Interpretive Sites" based on their current interpretive programs and visitor facilities. These designations and sites are described in further detail in Chapter 4 of the Byway Management Plan and are identified on the [Byway Access and Interpretive Sites Map](#).

#### Byway Anchor Sites

1. Thomas Stone National Historic Site
2. St. Clement's Island – Potomac River Museum
3. Historic St. Mary's City
4. Sotterley Plantation

#### Byway Interpretive Sites

1. Mount Carmel Monastery
2. Smallwood Retreat House
3. Purse State Park
4. Douglas Point, Chiles Home Site
5. Friendship Farm Park
6. Old Durham Church
7. Port Tobacco Historic District
8. St. Thomas Manor (Chapel Point, St. Ignatius Church)
9. Christ Episcopal Church
10. St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church
11. Leonardtown
12. St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church
13. Cecil's Mill Historic District
14. Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park
15. Trinity Episcopal Church
16. St. Mary's College of Maryland
17. St. Ignatius Church
18. Point Lookout State Park



*The Crain Memorial Welcome Center along northbound US 301 near the Harry W. Nice Bridge after entering Charles County from Virginia*

Additional sites are also identified in Chapter 4 that have been suggested for incorporating into the Byway at some point in the future.

### Existing Visitor Services

Visitor services along the Byway are primarily available in La Plata and Leonardtown and at the four "Anchor Sites" identified above.

The following is a description of generally available accommodations, restaurants, and rest rooms. More detailed information regarding accommodations and restaurants can be found on the Counties' tourism websites: Charles County: <http://www.visitcharlescounty.com> and St. Mary's County: <http://tour.county.saint-marys.md.us>

There are four visitor centers located at the various Byway gateway points (see [Byway Access and Interpretive Sites Map](#)):

- Charles County Visitor Center in La Plata signed from US 301 from the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan areas
- Maryland Welcome Center at US 301 from the South from Virginia
- St. Mary's County Visitor Center located in Charlotte Hall and accessible from Annapolis and points east via MD 4 and MD 6
- Old Jail Visitor Information Center, Leonardtown





*Fresh local seafood is plentiful along the Byway*

### **Overnight Accommodations**

Overnight accommodations in Charles and St. Mary's Counties range from bed-and-breakfasts, hotels and motels, to cabins and camping. Hotels include both national chains and locally owned businesses, and several state parks offer multiple forms of camping.

### **Restaurants**

Visitors to the Religious Freedom Byway can choose from a wide variety of places to eat. Food choices include home-style restaurants, pubs, ethnic cuisine and fine dining. For the seafood lover, the Byway offers great opportunities to enjoy the bounties of the Chesapeake Bay.

### **Public Rest Rooms**

Public rest rooms are located at the following facilities:

- Charles County Tourism Office in La Plata, MD
- St. Mary's County Welcome Center in Charlotte Hall, MD
- The Crain Memorial Welcome Center on US 301 north, just over the Harry W. Nice Memorial Bridge in Charles County

In addition, attractions along the Byway with visitor facilities are listed in Chapter 4 of the Byway Management Plan.

## **2.3 Existing Roadway Conditions**

This section of the Plan includes a physical description of the roadway characteristics for the Byway and the currently planned and programmed transportation projects, including enhancement projects that are likely to occur along the Byway. Also discussed are the types of routine operations and maintenance activities that typically occur along the Byway to keep traffic flowing smoothly and safely.

### **Road Classification and Volume**

The Religious Freedom Byway is comprised of many State roadways and a few County roadways within Charles and St. Mary's Counties. Listed below is a physical description of the roadway characteristics beginning in Charles County and ending in St. Mary's County (Refer to the [Transportation Map](#), Appendix 1.

MD 6 is part of the Religious Freedom Byway in two sections. The first section of MD 6 is between Port Tobacco (at the intersection with Chapel Point Road) and western Hill Top (near the intersection with Durham Church Road). The second section of MD 6 that is part of the Religious Freedom Byway is between Riverside and the intersection with MD 425. MD 6 along both roadway sections is a two-lane roadway with an 18 to 24-foot roadway section. The posted speed limit along MD 6 in these sections is 50 MPH. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) varies between 2,232 and 3,812 within these two sections of MD 6. MD 6 is classified as a rural major collector roadway in the first section and a rural minor collector roadway in the second section.

MD 224 is part of the Religious Freedom Byway in the continuous section from Mason Springs to MD 6 (near Riverside). MD 224 is a two-lane roadway with a 16 to 22-foot roadway section. The posted speed limit on MD 224 is 50 MPH. ADT varies between 252 (near Riverside) to 5,892 (near Mason Springs). MD 224 is classified as a rural local roadway in the southern section near Riverside and is classified as rural major collector in the northern section near Mason Springs.

MD 225 is part of the Religious Freedom Byway in the continuous section from Mason Springs to Marshall Corner. MD 225 is a two-lane roadway with a 24-foot roadway section and an 8 to 10-foot shoulder. The posted speed limit on MD 225 is 50 MPH. The ADT along MD 225 in this section is 13,912. MD 225 is classified as a rural minor arterial roadway.

MD 234 is entirely part of the Religious Freedom Byway extending from US 301 in Charles County to MD 5 in St. Mary's County. MD 234 is a two-lane roadway with a 24-foot roadway section. The posted speed limit on MD 234 varies from 40 to 55 MPH. The ADT along MD 234 varies from 5,860 to 9,381. MD 234 is classified as rural minor arterial roadway.

MD 254 is entirely part of the Religious Freedom Byway extending from Charleston Creek to Cobb Island. MD 254 is a two-lane roadway with a 22 to 24-foot roadway section. The posted speed limit on MD 254 varies from 40 to 50 MPH. The ADT along MD 254 is 2,310. MD 254 is classified as a rural minor collector roadway.

MD 257 is entirely part of the Religious Freedom Byway extending from US 301 to Rock Point. MD 257 is a two-lane roadway with a 22-foot roadway section. The posted speed limit on MD 257 varies from 35 to 50 MPH. The ADT on MD 257 varies from 3,650 to 6,830. MD 257 is classified as a rural major collector roadway.

MD 425 is part of the Religious Freedom Byway in the continuous section from Ironside to MD 6 near Grayton. MD 425 is a two-lane roadway with a 20 to 22-foot roadway section. The posted speed limit on MD 425 varies from 40 to 50 MPH. The ADT on MD 425 is 2,510. MD 425 is classified as a rural major collector roadway.

US 301 is part of the Religious Freedom Byway only in the section from Bel Alton to Faulkner. US 301 is a median divided 48-foot roadway. The posted speed limit on US 301 is 55 MPH. The ADT within this section of US 301 is 24,331. US 301 is classified as a rural other principal arterial (OPA).

MD 5 is part of the Religious Freedom Byway in the section from MD 234 to Point Lookout. MD 5 is a two- to four- lane roadway with a roadway section varying from 20 to 48-feet. The posted speed limit on MD 5 varies from 30 to 50 MPH. The ADT on MD 5 varies from 1,910 (at Point Lookout) to 26,210 (at MD 245). MD 5 is classified as a rural local roadway near Point Lookout, a rural major collector north of Scotland Beach Road, an urban other principal arterial near MD 246, and a rural minor arterial north of MD 471.

MD 238 is part of the Religious Freedom Byway in the section from MD 234 to MD 242. MD 238 is a two-



*There are only a few places along the Byway where visitors have to cross or travel along US 301, the major north south artery through Charles County.*

lane roadway with a 24-foot roadway section. The posted speed limit on MD 238 varies from 40 to 45 MPH. The ADT on MD 238 varies from 1,361 near MD 242 to 2,051 near MD 234. MD 238 is classified as a rural minor collector roadway.

MD 242 is part of the Religious Freedom Byway in the section from MD 238 to Coltons Point. MD 242 is a two-lane roadway with a 20-foot roadway section. The posted speed limit on MD 242 is 40 MPH. The ADT on MD 242 varies from 771 (near Coltons Point) to 5,421 (near MD 238). MD 242 is classified as a rural minor collector near Coltons Point and a rural major collector north of MD 470.

MD 243 is entirely part of the Religious Freedom Byway extending from MD 5 to Cornish Point. MD 243 is a two-lane roadway with an 18- to 30-foot roadway section. The posted speed limit on MD 243 is 40 MPH. The ADT on MD 243 varies from 942 (near St. Francis Xavier Church) to 7,282. MD 243 is classified as a rural local road in the southern section and a rural major collector in the northern section.

MD 249 is entirely part of the Religious Freedom Byway extending from MD 5 to St. George Island. MD 249 is a two-lane roadway with a 20 to 24-foot roadway section. The posted speed limit on MD 249 varies from 30 to 50 MPH. The ADT varies from 2,090 (near St. George Island) to 6,750 (near MD 244).





*Maryland State Highway Administration is in the planning stages for a project to address capacity and turning movement issues along MD 5 approaching Leonardtown*

### Highway Safety and Roadway Character Issues

Daniel Consultants, Inc. (DCI) researched the traffic accident types along the Religious Freedom Byway. At intersections, the accident types were generally either left turn accidents or rear end collisions. Therefore, it is important that the installation of new signs along the Byway or the construction of pull-off areas at scenic vistas consider the ambient traffic conditions and accident histories to insure that roadway safety is not compromised by enhancements related to the promotion of the Religious Freedom Byway. However, given the rural nature of the vast majority of the Religious Freedom Byway, the implementation of new signing (or enhancement of existing signs) and possible construction of pull-off areas appears to be feasible without compromising the safety of the roadways.

### Planned Improvements

Based on the existing and planned land use along the Byway, the planned and programmed projects and the range of safety and capacity concerns that previously have been identified along the route, the following are the types of changes to the roadway and roadside that have occurred and are likely to continue occurring along the Byway.

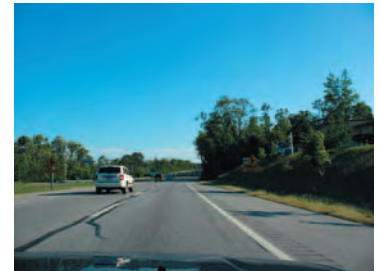
### Planned and Programmed Projects

The following projects have been identified in SHA's Highway Needs Inventory (HNI) and/or the DRAFT 2008 – 2013 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). For each of the proposed projects, DCI has identified the project as a likely Short-Term Project

(likely to be constructed within 5 years), Mid-Term Project (5-10 year), or Long-Term Project (beyond 10 years). Refer to [Transportation Map](#) for locations.

## CHARLES COUNTY

**US 301 from the Potomac River to south of La Plata:** No. 6 in the HNI – Primary System: This segment of US 301 is part of the US 301 South Corridor Transportation Project Planning Study. The existing US 301 roadway is divided and varies from four to six-lanes. There are no access controls. The proposed roadway would be a 6 lane access controlled facility with 10-foot wide outside shoulders and service roads. The study is currently in Project Planning and 40 percent complete. (LONG TERM PROJECT)



*US 301 Southbound approaching Edge Hill Road*

**MD 6 from MD 344 to east of Wards Run:** No. 1 in the HNI – Secondary System: This is a two-lane reconstruct project. The existing roadway has two 10-foot wide lanes with no shoulders. The proposed roadway would have two 12-foot lanes with four-foot wide shoulders. (SHORT TERM PROJECT)



*MD 6, West of Port Tobacco*

**MD 225 from MD 224 to US 301:** No 6 in the HNI – Secondary System: This is a two-lane reconstruct project. The existing roadway has two 12-foot lanes with 8 to 10-foot shoulders. The proposed will maintain the same typical section. (SHORT TERM PROJECT)



*Wider cross-section along the Nanjemoy Loop*

**MD 425 from MD 6 at Grayton to MD 6 at Ironsides:** No. 10 in the HNI – Secondary System. This is a two-lane reconstruct project. The existing roadway has two 11-foot lanes and no shoulders. The proposed roadway would have two 12-foot lanes with four-foot shoulders. (MID-TERM PROJECT)



*MD 425, northbound approaching Friendship Farm Park*

## ST. MARY'S COUNTY

**MD 5 from the Ranger Station to south of Camp Brown Road:** No. 2 in the HNI – Secondary System and Line 3 in the draft 2008 – 2013 CTP. This is a two-lane reconstruct: The existing roadway has two 11-foot lanes and no shoulders. The proposed roadway would have two 11-foot lanes with six-foot shoulders. Project Planning started in 1994 and was completed in 1997. Engineering began in 1997 and is 50 percent complete. Engineering is “on hold” due to the lack of funding for the acquisition of right-of-way and construction. The tentative date for advertisement is October 2008. (MID-TERM PROJECT)



*MD 5 approaching Point Lookout State Park*

**MD 5 from MD 246 to north of MD 471:** No. 3 in the HNI – Secondary System: This is a multi-lane reconstruct. The existing roadway has two 12-foot lanes with no shoulders. The proposed roadway will be a five-lane, 62-foot wide closed section. (MID-TERM PROJECT)



*Intersection of MD 246 and MD 5*

**MD 5 from MD 471 to MD 435:** No. 4 in the HNI – Secondary System: This is a divided highway reconstruct. The existing roadway has two 12-foot lanes. The proposed roadway will have four 12-foot lanes (two in each direction) and be divided. (MID-TERM PROJECT)



*MD 5 approaching Callaway*

**MD 5 from MD 245 to MD 243:** No. 5 of the HNI and Line 4 in the draft 2008 – 2013 CTP. This is a multi-lane reconstruct. The existing roadway is a closed section with four 11-foot lanes (two in each direction) and a four-foot wide painted median. The proposed roadway will be a 62-foot wide urban section with a center turn lane, auxiliary lanes where needed and sidewalks. Project Planning began in January of 2007 and is expected to be complete by the Winter of 2009/2010. (MID-TERM PROJECT)



*MD 5, Leonardtown*

## Existing Enhancement and Related Projects

The Maryland State Highway Administration has various funding programs for bicycle, pedestrian and other types of transportation and enhancement projects. The following projects are funded in Charles and St. Mary's Counties (CTP 2007-12) on or near the Byway.

### St. Mary's County

\$638,500 in Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) funds have been committed to purchase a 14-acre parcel of land that encompasses more than 2,400 feet of frontage along MD 5 (Point Lookout Road). The acquisition provides a 300-foot deep forested buffer along MD 5 for the purpose of preserving the scenic viewshed at the entrance to the St. Mary's City National Historic Landmark District. The parcel that now will be preserved is adjacent to a 196-acre subdivision that is planned as a housing development.

MD 5 - at Golden Beach Road (Retrofit Sidewalk Program, \$18,000)

MD 5 BUS - Leonardtown (Community Safety and Enhancements Program, \$5,203,000)

### Charles County

Indian Head Boardwalk (Transportation Enhancement \$1,504,000)

The Maryland Recreational Trails Program also funds projects related to transportation. A project has been funded in the vicinity of Purse State Park through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.



### Statewide Projects of Interest to the Byway:

Maryland Roadside  
Historic Markers Website  
(Transportation Enhancement  
\$182,000)

### **Projects/Activities of the District Offices (SHA District 5)**

The primary responsibility for undertaking routine maintenance work along the Byway is helped by the District 5 Offices of the Maryland State Highway Administration. District 5 is also responsible for implementing 3R Work on the Byway (Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation). Finally, District 5 offices handle such items as spot safety improvements, traffic signalization, access permits, and signage, along with other small-scale projects. The following summarizes the types of changes that happen routinely along the Byway:

#### **Roadway and roadside geometry:**

Includes changes to horizontal and vertical alignment to increase sight distances, removal of fixed objects in roadside clear zones, provision of guardrails or barriers, shoulder maintenance and reconstruction.

#### **Small bridges:**

Reconstruction, parapet walls, etc. – for example, a bridge on MD 234 in St. Mary's County over St. Clements Creek is under design for rehabilitation, to include changes to the surface, approaches and parapet walls.



*Existing Bridge over St. Clement's Creek, MD 234*

#### **Regulation of traffic:**

Providing turn lanes, channelization of turning movements, installation of traffic control devices, changes to speed limits, warning signs, etc.



*Existing directional signage, MD 5 at MD 234*



*General Joseph Hooker Historical Marker along the Nanjemoy Loop*

### **Access management:**

Provision of access to a state highway, installation of ingress or egress lanes, generally associated with new development or change in use of adjoining private property.

### **Lighting:**

Installation of new fixtures, night-sky issues (glare, light trespass)

### **Roadside maintenance and management:**

Mowing practices, wildflowers, invasive species management, vista and wayside management (pull-offs, historic markers)

### **Bicycles and pedestrians:**

Separated shared use pathways, sidewalks, ADA compatibility, crosswalks

### **Off-premise signs and billboard permitting:**

No new billboards may be permitted on those portions of the Byway that are on the National Highway System. US 301 and MD 5 from the junction point at MD 234 to MD 489 (Park Hall Road) are on the National Highway System. Off-premise signs in the highway right-of-way are found along the Byway and need to be addressed.

Any business seeking to install a sign along any road must be in conformance with the sign provisions contained in the St. Mary's County Zoning Ordinance. The traveling public often has an interest in being able to find businesses that serve their needs, and businesses want to be sure that the traveling public can find them. These needs can also be served either through the Tourism Area Corridor (TAC) signing program or through off-premise signs on private property that conforms to St. Mary's County sign regulations. These needs will also be addressed under marketing strategies.

## 2.4 Vision and Goals

The following vision statement and overall goals were developed through initial Advisory Committee and public meetings to provide a foundation for the Byway Management Planning effort.

### Vision for the Byway

The Religious Freedom Byway presents the story of America's founding as it unfolded on the shores of the Potomac River in Southern Maryland from initial settlement through the Revolutionary War. More than just a glimpse of history, the Byway links together the many significant historic buildings, landscapes, and waterways of Southern Maryland to present an authentic story of our nation's dramatic beginnings.

Whether they are traveling by land or water, spectacular scenery along the Potomac River and its tributaries enables both visitors and residents to appreciate the region's remarkable historic, scenic, and natural qualities. The landscape's rural areas, interspersed with woodlands, farms, small towns, and extensive waterways and wetlands, create an experience unique to Southern Maryland.

The byway works like an outdoor museum, making it easy to follow, fun to experience, and challenging to the minds of visitors and residents of all ages. Landscape exhibits and historic places tell a coherent story from one stop to the next. Festivals, seasonal events, and symposia explore the many aspects of the Southern Maryland story. Restaurants, inns, country stores and farmers markets along with opportunities to paddle, bicycle and walk help to accommodate a slower-paced discovery of our heritage.

### Goals for the Byway

Advisory Committee members were asked at the beginning of the planning process to brainstorm ideas regarding the management of the Byway—first identifying the assets of the Byway, then the challenges that must be overcome for the Byway to become a success. With that in mind, Advisory Committee members then listed the top three actions, projects or programs. The result was a list of ideas that formed the basis for developing management strategies for the Byways. At the July 2007 public byway planning workshop, participants were asked similar questions resulting in a more

complete list with some sense of priorities. The results of these meetings are documented in Appendix 2, Public Involvement (see [http://www.lardnerklein.com/rfb\\_draftvisiongoals82007.pdf](http://www.lardnerklein.com/rfb_draftvisiongoals82007.pdf)).

Over the course of six Advisory Committee meetings and the February 2008 public byway planning workshop, the goals and strategies were revised and refined. Five overall goals have emerged from these meetings:

- 1. Preserve, maintain, and enhance the character defining qualities of the Byway corridor** to provide a memorable experience for those that travel and live along the Byway.
- 2. Establish the Byway as a primary touring route in the Southern Maryland Heritage Area** and as a destination unto itself to educate visitors about the early history of the region, its effect on the nation's founding and the struggles for religious freedom and tolerance.
- 3. Use the Byway to create a coherent travel experience** linking historic places to tell the story of Maryland's founding and colonial development and its significance to our nation's history.
- 4. Utilize Context Sensitive Solutions to design byway projects** and work cooperatively with all federal, state and local agencies to make it easier and safer to follow the Byway in a manner that respects its cultural and environmental resources.
- 5. Manage and market the Byway** by coordinating Smart Growth Initiatives and partnering with all federal, state and local agencies and programs to give the Byway a voice in future land use, transportation, heritage tourism, and economic development activities in Southern Maryland.

The following chapters discuss the character defining qualities of the Byway (Chapter 3), the recommended strategies to achieve the goals of the plan (Chapter 4), and a framework for establishing a permanent group to manage the Byway over time (Chapter 5).

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# Religious Freedom Byway

## Intrinsic Qualities



*The Dove, Historic St. Mary's City*

Winding through Charles and St. Mary's Counties, the Religious Freedom Byway guides travelers through some of Maryland's richest history and most beautiful landscapes. The area's intrinsic qualities, evident in the abundant historic sites, natural resources, scenic beauty and recreational opportunities along the Byway, contribute to a visitor experience and regional character unique to Southern Maryland's Western Shore. Here Native American, European, and African American histories are intertwined. Stories of differing ways of life and of establishment, displacement, bondage, political rivalry, religious conflict, cultural differences, and change are told through the region's historic sites and landscapes.

The natural resources that supported the early peoples of Southern Maryland in times of conflict and peace remain, in many cases, intact: fertile soils for farming, waterways for fishing and transport, and forests for hunting and lumber. The landscape, a mosaic of bucolic farmland, dense woodland, rolling hills, rural villages and vast waterways, possesses a scenic beauty unlike any other in the country, reinforcing the unique character of Southern Maryland.

Throughout this landscape, visitors are encouraged to engage: recreational and educational opportunities enable children and adults to learn about the nation's beginnings, experience the outdoors and appreciate the region's natural beauty. Each of these intrinsic qualities – the history, the natural resources, scenic beauty and recreational opportunities – supports the Byway themes and contributes to the Byway experience. This chapter examines the intrinsic qualities that define the Religious Freedom Byway.

### **3.1 Historical Context and Qualities**

The western shore of the peninsula that forms Southern Maryland was the location of one of the nation's earliest colonial settlements. The region's story of early settlement over a period of 150 years in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is about the transformation of a continent. It is a story of national significance, and it is a story that is unique to Southern Maryland. Because of its significance, the historic quality is the primary intrinsic quality of the Religious Freedom Byway.

North America was a place of human occupation for over 10,000 years before European settlers arrived on its shores. By the early seventeenth century, the Piscataway Indians were dominant along the western shores of the Potomac River. Like other Native American tribes within the region, the Piscataway had a well established way of life in which they carefully managed the landscape and its resources. Most Piscataway tribes lived in temporary villages near the riverfront, where soils were fertile and wetlands provided a variety of wild foodstuffs. Along with hunting and fishing, these tribes engaged in agriculture for sustenance. Fields were cleared for mixed crops of corn, squash, and beans. When yields fell, fields were left to revert to forest and new fields were cleared, periodically moving villages in the process. The Native Americans had established a way of life and an ecological balance radically different from that of the European settlers who eventually arrived within the region.

George Calvert was a talented and ambitious man who served as secretary of state to King James I of England. For his services, Calvert was named Baron of Baltimore in Ireland. With his son Cecil, he undertook a series of colonial enterprises that led to the establishment of a colony in Southern Maryland. George Calvert died before his charter to establish the Maryland colony was granted, but the project was implemented vigorously by his son Cecil, the new Lord Baltimore, in accordance with his vision.

The Maryland colony was economically motivated, intended to further the family's financial interests while extending their king's dominions. The Calverts were Catholic, and in Anglican England they and



*St. Thomas Manor was acquired in 1649 under Lord Baltimore's "Conditions of Plantation." Much of the landscape still retains the patterns associated with the Manor that can be seen from this vantage point at St. Ignatius Church.*

other Catholics were persecuted for their beliefs and forced into an uneasy secrecy. In creating a colony, they faced extraordinary political and practical difficulties. Their vision was a colony comprised of a system of manors modeled after those in England, where lords (primary investors) would control a land area and the colonists they imported to work their land. Through the worker's loyalty to their lords, and the lord's loyalty to their proprietor, a stable and economically profitable social system would be created.

The Calverts looked to their wealthy Catholic peers to invest in the new endeavor, seeking to attract the younger sons who would not inherit family lands in England, because these were typically bequeathed to firstborn sons. Although the venture was to be led by Catholics, the Calverts took every measure to demonstrate that they and their colony were fervently loyal to the king and to England, not to the Pope. To this end, they recruited the Jesuits, independent and controversial in the eyes of Rome, to participate in their effort. Protestant sympathizers would also join in their venture.

Most significant to the advance of western ideas, the Calverts introduced the concept of the division of church and state into the New World and into Western political discourse. In their colony, all Christians would be free to exercise their beliefs, and government would be free of religious influence. This practical measure was intended to help prevent religious rivalry in the colony and fear at court that Catholicism would be promoted as the religion of the colony.

In implementing their vision, things did not go so smoothly. Recruitment was difficult. Fewer investors were signed on than were sought. Fewer common colonists were found than were hoped for. Lord Baltimore's initial colonists landed on the shores of Southern Maryland in 1634. Over the next fifty years, the fledgling colony became established and slowly expanded. Grants for numerous manors were issued, averaging approximately 3,000 acres each, and were concentrated upon the western shores of the Potomac River in the region traversed by the Religious Freedom Byway. Initially, manors were granted to individuals who would invest in the enterprise and import settlers to work their lands. Later, grants were awarded to relatives, friends, officials, and those who had performed services for the colony.

The Piscataway peoples at first welcomed the new colonists as traders and as military support to offset harassment by the warlike Susquehannock tribes from the north. For the most part, the degree of conflict between Native Americans and colonists that occurred elsewhere along the East Coast did not occur in southern Maryland. Soon, however, the new diseases brought by the colonists decimated the Piscataway population, and these longtime residents were displaced by a European system of land ownership that was completely at odds with their ancient way of life.

The colonists, however, were also subject to new diseases with which they were not familiar. The wetlands and swamps of the river lowlands were unhealthy to the Europeans, a problem not experienced in upland colonies, such as those in New England. New colonists were subject to "seasoning," a period of exposure to disease during which many succumbed, severely slowing the expansion of their population. Manor lords recruited young males to work their lands as indentured servants, usually for a set period of five years, after which they would be free to leave. War, economic decline, and disease at home during the mid-1600s drove many to risk the venture.

Colonial life in Maryland was not easy. Hard manual work, isolation, and early death were common. Stable family groups were slow to develop in early Maryland. The period of servitude, exposure to "seasoning," the small number of women, and premature death inhibited population growth and the development of a stable society as compared to





*Tobacco, once the foundation of the economy of Southern Maryland, now is seen as an endangered cultural resource. A more concerted effort is being made to preserve its legacy.*

other colonies. The death of one or both parents led to many blended families. It was not until the early 1700s that a second generation, more resistant to the local diseases, was able to establish stronger, multi-generational family groups.

By the 1690s, circumstances had changed for English males. Prospects in England were less dire, and for those deciding to immigrate to America, the opening of Pennsylvania provided opportunities for land that did not require a period of indentured servitude. As a consequence, the flow of young white males to work on the plantations in Southern Maryland slowed and dried up. In its place, landowners began to purchase African slaves to satisfy their need for laborers. For a period, indentured servants and slaves worked side-by-side. By about 1700, however, slavery had become a necessity of the plantation economy.

Tobacco was the economic foundation of life in Southern Maryland. The prospects and fortunes of landowners and workers ebbed and flowed with the stability of the tobacco markets in Europe. When the markets were strong, they prospered, or at least survived. When markets were weak or disrupted by war, growth slowed, and many had to find other ways to make ends meet.

The landscape that was created by the colonial tobacco economy was one of modest, dispersed plantations. Sites close to the river for shipping were preferred, and waterfront plantations had their own wharves. The best land for growing tobacco was selected for cultivation, with areas in between left untended. Fields were relatively small and separated

from each other and the plantation center. Servants or slaves frequently lived in small groups in the vicinity of their fields, away from the plantation house. The landowners' houses were small, ephemeral, and little better than those of their servants. Permanent brick plantation homes largely did not appear until the mid-1700s. Towns did not develop; the plantation was the center of economic and social life. The company of friends required travel by water or a ride on horseback over rough inland roads.

If the realities of economic life were hard, so were the realities of political and religious rivalry. Lord Baltimore, back in England, was under constant pressure to protect his proprietorship from political challenges at court. His entire fortune was invested in the success of the colony, and he supported his family by serving as secretary to his father-in-law. In Maryland, his colonial assembly had a will of its own and resisted his directions. Anti-Catholic sentiment flared despite the assembly's passage of the Act Concerning Religion of 1649, legislating the separation of church and state. The growing population of Protestant workers and indentured servants in the colony did not bode well for a leadership of largely Catholic landowners. Rebellion ensued with political changes in England, and in the 1650's for several years Lord Baltimore lost control of his colony. In 1689, Protestants took over the colonial government for good, and the colonial capital was moved to Annapolis. Lord Baltimore's policy of religious tolerance was ended, and the Anglican Church was established as the government-supported church.

By the early 1700s, the initial settlement period was over. Second-generation residents were acclimated to the local climate, family groups were stabilized, the population was growing, and agriculture was diversifying to a degree. An enslaved workforce remained the underpinning of the tobacco-based agricultural economy. The early manors did not survive as the centers of powerful families; some manors were sold off whole, some were sold in pieces over a generation, and others were divided by inheritance. Maryland became a stable colony, and the citizens of Southern Maryland became active participants in the affairs of the colony and the emerging nation.

The story of the settlement of Southern Maryland is the story of the Potomac River landscape. Manors, plantation sites, tobacco fields, wharf





*Historic St. Mary's City, Chapel reconstruction*

locations, roadways, and other man-made features of the early landscape were sited based upon desirable landscape characteristics. Very little of the built environment remains from the early settlement period, but many such sites are well known, and several developed into established eighteenth century plantations with built resources that survive today. Historic St. Mary's City has undertaken significant archeological investigations of its seventeenth century settlement and has reconstructed period buildings for interpretation and education. However, there are many other places where the stories can be told. Each early manor has a story that traces the changes that occurred in the colony over the 150 years of colonial development. Publicly accessible sites within former manors can be used to tell these stories. Plantation sites are found all along the Byway.

Established interpretive sites such as Thomas Stone National Historic Site, Sotterley Plantation, and Smallwood's Retreat House tell the story of successive generations and their occupation of the land. Churches are particularly significant, both as places to tell the stories of manors and plantations, and as places to interpret the religious tensions and conflict that threatened and overwhelmed the early settlement. The stories of individuals buried in historic cemeteries can be used to relate the experiences of their families. Natural areas along the Byway can tell the story of the natural landscape and the occupation and management of the landscape by Native Americans. Specific recommendations for interpreting the Byway are included in the Interpretation and Education chapter of this Byway Management Plan.

The historic and cultural landscapes along the Byway continue to reflect the values that shaped it from

the colonial settlement period. In addition to these broad landscapes, a number of historic sites have been recognized for their significance. These sites are identified on Map 4, [St. Mary's County Historical Resources](#), and Map 5, [Charles County Historical Resources](#) located in Appendix 1, Inventory Maps. The historical discussion above is drawn in large part from two books, *English and Catholic, The Lords Baltimore in the Seventeenth Century*, by John D. Kruger (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004) and *Tobacco Colony, Life in Early Maryland 1650-1720* by Gloria L. Main (Princeton University Press, 1982) as well as information developed through other JMA projects within the region.

### 3.2 Cultural Quality

The cultural intrinsic quality of the Religious Freedom Byway is closely related to and supportive of the historic quality. The transformation of the landscape from Native American occupation to English tobacco plantations draws contrasts and distinctions between three radically different cultural groups and traditions: the Native American Piscataway tribes, the English colonists, and the African slaves that were eventually imported to work the plantations.

Like most of eastern North America, the western shores of the peninsula that comprises southern Maryland have a long history of Native American occupation spanning over 10,000 years. The evolution of Native American peoples through the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Woodland periods traces their cultural and social responses to changing environmental conditions within the region. In the centuries before European colonization, the Native Americans in the Chesapeake region developed agriculture, permanent year-round settlements, and complex social structures. Tribes interacted with other regional populations in trade and in conflict, and a blending of Native American cultures evolved within the Chesapeake area.

The contrast with English European cultural systems could not have been more marked. Land ownership, intensive agricultural production for export, religious systems, governance, and technology are just a few of the many dramatic differences that mark the distinction between the Native American and European cultures as they clashed along the shores of the Potomac. Decimation by disease and the overwhelming influx of new settlers occupying land in the Maryland colony resulted in the inevitable and

relatively quick domination of European culture over Native American culture. The introduction of African slaves into the English plantation system added a critical new cultural element that proved extremely important to evolving American history and culture. These contrasting cultural systems are evident today in the history of the region, in remaining built and archeological sites, and in the remaining social groups and institutions in Southern Maryland today.

### 3.3 Archeological Quality

Archeological sites are of great importance to the understanding and interpretation of the Religious Freedom Byway. The Byway's period of interpretation extends from prehistoric occupation, through initial English settlement in 1634, to the end of the colonial period as marked by the American Revolution. The subjects of interpretation are the changes that occurred over successive generations as colonization was established. Native American occupation diminished and all but disappeared, and an English tobacco plantation system developed on the land. Over the seventeenth century, colonial settlement was an arduous endeavor yet was persistently pursued. In the eighteenth century, the colony blossomed into an established, successful community that was fully engaged in national affairs.

Historic resources from the early settlement period exist today primarily as landscape and archeological sites. The ephemeral nature of early construction and the shifting circumstances that occurred in ownership and occupation of the land resulted in the disappearance of early built resources. Nonetheless, sites related to both Native American occupation and colonial settlement exist throughout the Byway landscape, from Point Lookout at the southeastern tip of the peninsula to Smallwood's Retreat at the northwest end of the Nanjemoy loop. St. Mary's City is widely recognized for its archeological significance. Sites such as Friendship Farm Park and Port Tobacco are less well known but are also rich in their potential to tell the story of Maryland's colonial history. Archeological sites will be instrumental in the interpretation of the Religious Freedom Byway.

The archaeological richness of this landscape is portrayed on Map 4, [St. Mary's County Cultural Resources](#), and Map 5, [Charles County Cultural Resources](#) located in Appendix 1, Inventory Maps. The large grids shown on the map indicate the

presence of archaeological sites (exact locations not shown). From a regional perspective, there are tremendous opportunities to learn more about this rich archaeological heritage. Two sites in particular are nationally significant in this regard, Historic St. Mary's City, recognized as a National Historic Landmark, and Port Tobacco.

Historic St. Mary's City broadly interprets the rich archaeological heritage of Southern Maryland through a range of programs that are accessible to the public, as well as researchers from around the world through a program originally established in 1971. According to the National Park Service St. Mary's City is "probably the most intact 17th-century English town surviving in our nation...represented entirely by archaeological resources" (<http://www.stmaryscity.org/arcaeology.htm>). Archaeological research at HSMC has resulted in the following interpretive sites now open (or soon to be open) to the public.

- The Chapel is being reconstructed on its original foundations, and adjacent exhibits will help tell the significant story of early Maryland, the birthplace of religious freedom in America.
- The Print House re-construction, furnished as a living history exhibit, opened in 2007.
- Archaeological excavation of St. John's Freehold, one of the state's most important historical sites, was recently concluded in preparation for the construction of a major new exhibit.
- Visitors are invited to watch some archaeological excavations, such as took place at the location of Garrett Van Sweringen's 17th-century inn. Van Sweringen, a Dutch-born settler, was a remarkable entrepreneur and a leader in the development of St. Mary's City. A new exhibit opened at this site in mid-2007.
- Activities on Tidewater Archaeology Weekend (the last weekend of July) visitors are invited to work side by side with archaeologists and are given an insider's look at the museum's collections in the archaeology lab.
- Historic St. Mary's City and St. Mary's College of Maryland host a rigorous ten-week Field School in historical archaeology, one of the premier field schools in the country.

Another very significant resource, but one perhaps less known, is the Port Tobacco Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to the National Register listing: "In the context of lower Southern Maryland, Port



Tobacco is a singularly unique cultural resource. Believed to be the region's oldest continuously occupied site, it was Charles County's largest and most important town from the late 17th century through to the end of the 19th century, and from 1727 until 1895, its seat of government."



*Reconstructed Courthouse at Port Tobacco*

Also from the listing:

"Port Tobacco's history and physical development is remarkably well documented in the county's archives and other historic documents. This information, in combination with its large number of known building sites, supports the conclusion that it is an archeological resource of inestimable value whose continued study will greatly advance our knowledge of the material culture of the Chesapeake region."

Although, according to the NR listing, "little now remains to recall the town's former existence," two architecturally significant 18th century buildings survive. The 1819/21-1892 courthouse was reconstructed on its original site in 1972, and is open as a museum for school groups and others. The Port Tobacco Archaeological Project, sponsored by the Archeological Society of Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust, the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco, the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium, and Preservation Maryland, is leading the efforts for its preservation and interpretation.

### 3.4 Scenic Quality

The Religious Freedom Byway guides visitors through the scenic landscape of Southern Maryland. Although predominantly rural, Southern Maryland also features mature forests, waterways, historic sites and period architecture, all of which contribute to a rich visual experience along the Byway. Though much of this experience occurs while driving along the roadway, points of interest along the Byway route contribute to the region's scenic quality and enhance the traveler's visual experience.

The roadways that compose the Religious Freedom Byway are primarily two-lane rural roads. Despite the relatively consistent traffic patterns and road widths, the roadway experience varies greatly. Along the Nanjemoy Loop, the viewshed is narrow due to the mature forests that line the roadway. At times, travelers can see far ahead within this narrow viewshed, while at other times, gently rolling topography or a curve in the road limits sight distance. At Pope's Creek, travelers heading south come around a curve and out of a wooded stretch to face open views of the Potomac River. As the Byway skirts the shore, travelers can see Virginia on the other side of the river, but as the Byway abruptly turns inland, the river view disappears.

As is the case at Pope's Creek, further down the Byway the open vistas come and go. From Allen's Fresh to Point Lookout, the roadway often seems expansive, because of the wide open vistas on either side. Yet this sense of openness is frequently interrupted by stands of mature forest and hedgerows dividing the rural landscape. Along these stretches the views are very narrow and focused but equally beautiful.

While the drive along the roadway itself offers scenic views and a stimulating visual experience, several specific sites along the Byway contribute to the region's scenic quality:

- Friendship Farm Park offers tranquil views of the marshlands along Nanjemoy Creek, and the Bald Eagles soaring down to their nests evoke a sense of serenity.



*View from Friendship Farm Park*



- The Thomas Stone National Historic Site has preserved the beauty of a colonial plantation. From the entry drive, visitors can look across the open field at Thomas Stone's house standing in front of a backdrop of mature forest.



*Manor House at Thomas Stone National Historic Site*

- MD 234 at Allens Fresh teases travelers with views of Zekiah Swamp that extend for miles to the north and south of the Byway.



*Open view of Zekiah Swamp from Budds Creek Road*

- Further south, St. Ignatius Church, standing atop a 120-foot bluff in Chapel Point State Park, offers picturesque views of the Potomac and Port Tobacco Rivers.



*View from Cemetery at St. Ignatius, St. Thomas Manor*

- Driving along the Byway visitors are welcomed to St. Mary's City by views of the College and St. Mary's River.



*Approaching St. Mary's College*



Each byway branch, including Cobb Island (below left), St. Clement's Island (see page 7), Piney Point, St. George's Island (below center) and Point Lookout State Park (below right) offers exquisite views of the Potomac River and in some cases, Chesapeake Bay.

### 3.5 Recreational Quality

As it winds along Southern Maryland's Western Shore, the Religious Freedom Byway provides access to a wide variety of recreational opportunities. From hiking quiet woodland trails, to boating or paddling on the numerous creeks and rivers, Charles and St. Mary's Counties offer activities to suit just about everyone. These activities are closely tied to the region's natural resources; consequently, they play a significant role in creating a visitor experience unique to Southern Maryland and enhancing the quality of life in local communities.

#### Recreational Opportunities

The Religious Freedom Byway provides direct access to the following significant recreational opportunities:

- recreational resources directly related to Western Shore Maritime, including sea kayaking, sailing, paddling, and motorboating;
- recreational resources directly related to hunting and fishing in the mid-Atlantic region;
- bicycling along trails within Southern Maryland that serve as a destination for the greater mid-Atlantic region.

Each of these is described in greater detail in the following section.

#### Bicycling

For those interested in leaving their cars behind and exploring the Byway at a slower pace, gently rolling topography and lightly traveled two-lane roads provide ideal bicycling opportunities. Along the more heavily traveled stretches of the Byway, wide shoulders provide room for cyclists to ride safely in most places. Six of the twelve Southern Maryland Bicycle Routes – published loops varying in length from 7 to 58 miles, each guiding cyclists to different natural and historic sites – are located either directly on or adjacent to the Religious Freedom Byway. Among these, the Naturally Historic Route follows the Byway route almost exactly, along shady, narrow, tree-lined roads with a few challenging hills to make things interesting. At the other end of the Byway the very flat To the Point Route also mirrors the Byway from St. Mary's City to Point Lookout, the southernmost tip of St. Mary's County, and then turns off at Ridge, returning to St. Mary's City along Three Notch Road. Each year in May, for those interested in a different type and speed of cycling, the Patuxent Velo Cycling Club hosts the Leonardtown Criterium,

a competitive circuit race in the heart of historic Leonardtown. This event offers advanced as well as entry level categories for beginning racers to try their hand (and legs) at the sport.



*Point Lookout State Park*

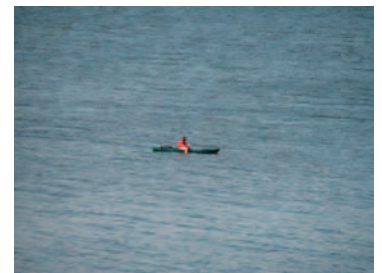
#### Water Sports

The unique geography of Southern Maryland provides water enthusiasts with a wide variety of places and ways to enjoy and interact with the many creeks, rivers, and bays along the Byway. Some of the many marine activities people enjoy in this area include

- kayaking,
- sea kayaking,
- canoeing,
- sailing,
- motor boating,
- bass fishing,
- marine fishing, and
- scuba diving.

Paddling, whether in a kayak or canoe, is perhaps the best way to

experience some of the area's natural, historical and cultural resources. Gliding through the marshlands of the Nanjemoy Natural Resources Management Area (NRMA) in a kayak



*St. Mary's River*

or hugging the Breton Bay shoreline by canoe, birdwatchers can get a close look at bald eagles, great blue herons and several other species native to this region. Paddlers interested in maritime history can explore the World War I-era wooden steam ships jutting out from beneath the surface of Mallows Bay. Sea kayakers looking for adventure have easy access



to the Chesapeake Bay from Point Lookout State Park. Finally, those looking for an established path can follow water trails, such as the Potomac River Water Trail, accessible from multiple launch sites in Charles and St. Mary's Counties, or the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, equipped interpretive buoys and landings at several gateway sites.

Sailing and motor boating offer additional opportunities for recreating in and exploring the waterways along the Religious Freedom Byway. Looking downstream on the Potomac River, boaters can enjoy open views of the Chesapeake, and those who want to fish can take advantage of the Potomac's national reputation as a "world class fishery."<sup>3</sup> Numerous marinas in both counties provide services including boat repairs, supplies, and overnight slips, and several public launches allow for easy access to the water from the Byway.

For those who prefer not to man their own vessels, the Byway offers several opportunities to be a passenger on a water excursion. Visitors can explore Smith Island – Maryland's only inhabited island reachable only by boat – on Smith Island Cruises leaving from Point Lookout, or they can head out to St. Clement's Island – the first landing in Maryland by British colonists – on the St. Clement's Island Water Taxi. For a more interactive experience, visitors can spend an afternoon in the life of a Maryland waterman on *The Dee of St. Mary's*, one of the last working skipjacks in the world.

### Hiking

The Byway offers a variety of hiking opportunities at several locations. While canoeing or kayaking facilitates the exploration of the area's creeks and

marshes, hiking trails enable visitors to delve into the mixed hardwood and coniferous forests along the Byway. Purse State Park, St. Mary's River State Park, and the Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area (WMA) are among several public lands along the Byway with such trails. These hiking trails allow visitors to get close to the area's wildlife and enjoy being outdoors.

### Hunting

Both upland game and waterfowl hunting are popular activities in Southern Maryland. Regulated hunting areas are designated at some of the state parks and all of the WMAs in the region. First-come permanent blinds are located at certain parks, including Purse and Chapel Point State Parks, and a practice shooting and archery range is available at Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area.

### Recreational Facilities

The following publicly accessible facilities are available to support recreational opportunities throughout the Byway region.

### State Parks

#### Smallwood State Park

Smallwood State Park is located in Charles County along the Byway between MD 224 and Mattawoman Creek. The park was home to the Revolutionary War officer General William Smallwood. His plantation house on the park grounds, known as Smallwood's Retreat, has been restored and is open to visitors. Also available to visitors at the 628-acre park is a marina (Sweden Point Marina), fishing pier, boat launch, picnic area, camping area, pavilions, a recycled tire playground and nature trails. Occasionally the park features craft demonstrations, military exhibitions and other special events.<sup>4</sup>

#### Purse State Park

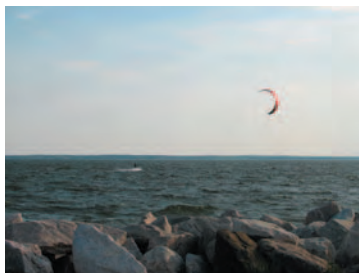
The southern-most entity in the Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area (NRMA), Purse State Park is approximately eleven miles south of Smallwood State Park along the Byway, between MD 224 and Wades Bay on the Potomac River. The park is primarily hardwood forest and marshland. A few unmarked trails that depart from a parking lot



*Windsurfing, St. Mary's River*



*Cobb Island*



*Parasurfing at St. George Island*



off of MD 224 wind through the forest. Forged by hunters, these trails also are enjoyed by birdwatchers and hikers. On the other side of the park, along the shore of the Potomac, a different kind of hunter can search for fossilized sharks' teeth, bones and shell fragments. This has become a popular activity at Purse State Park.

#### *Chapel Point State Park*

Situated on the Port Tobacco River, just south of Port Tobacco, Chapel Point State Park offers a variety of recreational opportunities, all amidst beautiful river views. The waterfront area has a small beach with a small boat (i.e. kayaks, canoes, etc.) launch and paddle-in campsite (available by permit only), making it an ideal fishing spot. Along the river, hunters can take advantage of four permanent blinds, and further inland, the 600-acre park is an ideal hunting ground for squirrels, rabbits, white-tailed deer and wild turkey. In addition, the park has three hunter parking areas and a small universally accessible hunting area.

#### *St. Clement's Island State Park*

On November 23, 1633, a small group of colonists set sail from England on two ships, *The Ark* and *The Dove*. On March 25, 1634, they reached the Potomac River, landing on a small island they named St. Clement's Island in honor of the patron saint of mariners. Today the island is a state park, distinguishing itself from the other parks in Charles and St. Mary's Counties as the only park accessible only by boat. A water taxi transports visitors to and from the island, while more extensive boat tours are offered by the Potomac River Museum on weekends. Once on the island visitors can hunt, fish, or hike any of the numerous trails on the island, or enjoy the water views over a picnic in one of the pavilions.

#### *St. Mary's River State Park*

St. Mary's River State Park covers two sites at the northern end of the St. Mary's River watershed. Between the two sites, the park contains a wide range of habitats, including woodlands, swamps, streams and a lake. The 250-acre lake, St. Mary's Lake, is the natural focal point of Site 1. Encircled by a 7.5 mile trail, the lake is not only a popular freshwater fishing site, but a popular hiking, biking and horseback riding destination as well. Site 1 also offers a comfort station, picnic tables, playground, boat launch ramp and parking lot. In contrast, Site 2



*St. Mary's Lake*

is relatively undisturbed. At 2,200 acres, this site is a management hunting area containing white-tailed deer as well as a variety of small game.

#### *Point Lookout State Park*

Jutting out into the Chesapeake Bay at the southern tip of St. Mary's County, Point Lookout State Park offers recreation amidst the county's most beautiful bay views. Here visitors can swim, fish, boat and hike. The park offers amenities including camp sites and cabins, a camp store, picnic area, playground, hiking trails, the Marshland Nature Center, and the Point Lookout Lighthouse, erected in 1830. In addition, the Civil War Museum commemorates the park's history as the site of a prison that held at least 52,264 Confederate soldiers during the Civil War.

### **State Forests, WMAs and NEAs**

#### *Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area*

Situated at the northern end of the Byway, the 1,723-acre Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area is composed primarily of hardwood forest. Oaks, hickories, maples, sycamores, poplars and beech provide habitat to a variety of woodland wildlife. Likewise, a few wetlands provide habitat to fish, turtles and a variety of waterfowl. While some of these wetlands are natural, waterfowl also flock to man-made wetland areas, called "greentree" reservoirs: areas that are deliberately flooded in the fall and winter. In addition to bottomland forest and wetland, approximately 15 acres are "kept in wildlife plantings and early succession to provide habitat and food for upland wildlife."<sup>5</sup> Such diverse habitats

provide great opportunities for birdwatching, nature photography and hunting. In addition, visitors can take advantage of the shooting range, trap range, and three-station archery range with a permit.

#### *Chicamuxen Wildlife Management Area*

Just west of the Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area, the Chicamuxen Watchable Wildlife Center is composed of 381 acres of prime marshlands, upland forested areas and agricultural fields. Once the site of a Civil War encampment, today the Wildlife Center is home to a variety of waterfowl, including black ducks, gadwall, mallards, bufflehead, wood ducks and bald eagles. Birdwatchers and hikers can enjoy the diverse wildlife while walking the many trails that traverse the site. Hunters, too, find recreational opportunities here, hunting white-tailed deer or ducks from the waterfowl blinds.

#### *Doncaster Demonstration Forest*

Centrally located in the middle of the Nanjemoy Loop, the Doncaster Demonstration Forest covers 1,477 acres, straddling MD 6, 13 miles west of La Plata. Visitors to the forest find yellow poplars, sweet gums, red and white oaks and pine trees. Home to a diverse wildlife population, the forest attracts hunters. With several miles of trails, the forest also appeals to hikers, horseback riders, bikers and cross country skiers.

#### *Mattawoman Natural Environment Area*

Just south of Indian Head in Charles County, at the mouth of Mattawoman Creek, the Mattawoman Natural Environment Area occupies 1,916 acres of forest and wetland. Host to bald eagles, red-headed woodpeckers, warblers, butterflies and dragonflies, the NEA attracts bird watchers and nature lovers. Currently railroad tracks traverse a portion of the site; however, an October 2000 study by Fermata Inc. recommends that the railroad bed be converted to a hiking and biking trail, and where the railroad abuts the edge of waterbodies or wetlands, boardwalks or viewing platforms be constructed to accommodate bird watchers.<sup>6</sup>



*Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area*

#### *Zekiah Swamp Natural Environment Area*

At 20 miles long and 3.4 miles wide, Zekiah Swamp is a significant natural resource in Charles County.<sup>7</sup> The Natural Environment Area is a 434-acre site located at the confluence of Zekiah Swamp Run with the Wicomico River. Nationally recognized and protected, the swamp provides habitat to a variety of wildlife and plant species. Consequently, it is a popular destination for anglers, kayakers, canoeists and birdwatchers hoping to catch a glimpse of the least bittern, king rail, short-eared owl, and seaside sparrow that reside here.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area*

In addition to Purse State Park, the Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area (NRMA) includes several sites north of Purse: the Ben Doane Area, the Mallows Bay Area, the Wilson Farm Area, the Douglas Point SRMA and the Douglas Point Area. Situated along six miles of MD Route 224 and totaling 1,921 acres, these sites offer a variety of natural, historical and recreational resources.<sup>9</sup> Like Purse State Park, Douglas Point is rich with wildlife and diverse plant species. Hiking and multi-use trails wind through the Douglas Point Area and SRMA, a portion of which is part of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. In addition, the Douglas Point SRMA contains the Chiles Homesite built in 1798 by Francis Shepard and home to the Reverend William J. Chiles from 1841 through 1874.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, the Mallows Bay Area contains both natural and historical resources. The Bay is home to at least 152 wooden EFC steamships built between 1817





*Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park*

and 1820 and abandoned off the shores of Charles County between 1924 and 1929. Today, the aquatic plants and animals of the Bay have claimed the steamship remains, and unique ecosystems thrive in the sunken hulls. Portions of the ships protrude out of the water, creating islands that have been overrun with vegetation and offer sanctuary to the region's birds, including herons, osprey and bald eagles. Kayakers and canoeists can weave in and out of the wreckage, exploring the natural and man-made elements of this environment.

### ***Museums and Educational Centers***

The byway hosts a number of small museums and education centers that also offer passive recreational opportunities, such as a nature trail or non-motorized access to water.

#### ***Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Center***

The Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Center is a outdoor learning facility serving the Charles County school system. Located on a 10-acre site on Nanjemoy Creek, the facility offers educational programming for school groups in a natural environment. The site features an aquatics lab, observatory, apiary, nature trails, 100-foot pier and boardwalk through Gut Marsh, as well as cabins and an enclosed dining pavilion for overnight stays.

#### ***Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Historic Park***

Fourteen miles upstream from the mouth of the Potomac River, the Piney Point Lighthouse was built in 1836 and retired by the United States Coast Guard in 1964. It was known as the 'Lighthouse of

Presidents' because several American presidents, beginning with James Madison, spent their summers on Piney Point. Today the lighthouse, a bell tower constructed in 1880, the lighthouse keeper's dwelling and several outbuildings built in the 1950s still occupy the site. One of these outbuildings, a chief petty officer's garage, has been converted into the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum. Exhibits in the museum chronicle the construction and operation of the lighthouse and document the role of the United States Coast Guard. The six-acre county park is open seven days a week from dawn until dusk, and the museum is open six days a week (closed on Wednesdays) from noon until 5:00 PM, May through October.<sup>11</sup>

#### ***St. Clement's Island Museum***

Situated on Coltons Point, across from St. Clement's Island, the St. Clement's Island Museum tells the story of the English colonists who reached the Potomac River in their two small ships, *The Ark* and *The Dove*. Exhibits in the museum document Maryland's beginnings as a colony founded in the spirit of religious toleration. Additional exhibits trace the region's rich river heritage, featuring the crabbing, fishing and oystering industries. The museum is open seven days a week from April through September and Wednesday through Sunday October through March.

### ***Regional, County and City Parks***

In addition to the numerous state parks, wildlife management areas, and educational facilities, Charles and St. Mary's Counties boast just as many regional, county and local recreational resources.

For nature enthusiasts, Friendship Farm Park offers a variety of recreational opportunities. Located in Charles County along Nanjemoy Creek, the park includes marshland rich with wildlife. These marshes are popular nesting sites for Bald Eagles, and consequently, are popular among birdwatchers as well. A county-owned boat ramp provides easy access to the creek for canoeists and kayakers to enjoy scenic views and the area's rich wildlife from the water, while a fishing pier provides access to the water for those who prefer to stay grounded.





*Friendship Farm Park*

Like Friendship Farm Park, Gilbert Run Park offers scenic views, trails and water activities. Located in Charlotte Hall in Charles County, the park features woodlands laced with hiking and nature trails. A 60-acre freshwater lake – equipped with a boat ramp – provides opportunities for canoeing, kayaking or rowing, and fisherman can catch bass, bluegill, trout and catfish from the fishing piers or small boats (electric motors only).<sup>12</sup>

In addition to enjoying the natural environment, visitors to the Byway can take advantage of numerous athletic facilities and other opportunities for active recreation. In southern Charles County, Southern Park features ball fields, a playground and tennis courts. In La Plata, Laurel Springs Regional Park offers baseball, softball, football and soccer fields, as well as a running/walking trail that follows the perimeter of the park. In St. Mary's County, numerous parks along the Byway offer soccer fields, basketball and tennis courts, and baseball diamonds. These include Chancellor's Run Regional Park (Great Mills, MD), Seventh District Park (Bushwood, MD), Miedzinski Park (Leonardtown, MD) and Cecil Park (Valley Lee, MD). Along MD Route 235, which roughly parallels the Byway, several other parks offer additional athletic and recreational facilities: Fifth District Park in Charlotte Hall; Chaptico Park in Mechanicsville; Dorsey Park in Hollywood; St. Andrews Estates Park, Myrtle Point Park and Town Creek Park in California; and Nicolet Park and Jarboesville Park in Lexington Park.

### 3.6 Natural Quality

Stretching nearly 190 miles, it is not surprising that the Religious Freedom Byway takes travelers through a variety of natural environments containing numerous unique natural resources. These environments include natural forests, marshes and wetlands, coastal bays, and streams, each of which supports diverse plant and animal populations. At times, the Byway cuts through woodlands or marshes, where trees and dense undergrowth creep up to the edge of the roadway. Immediately adjacent to the roadway, these forests and bogs become part of the Byway driving experience. At other times, these natural resources are more secluded and not immediately visible from the roadway. In each situation, visitors are encouraged to explore these more remote areas in a canoe, on a bike ride, or on a hike, discovering the Byway's natural resources and engaging with its diverse wildlife, plant species and habitats.

#### Rivers and Streams

Numerous stops along the Religious Freedom Byway offer views of and opportunities to interact with the natural resources that make this area unique:



*Bird nesting off the Cobb Island branch*

the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Running along the last stretch of the Potomac River before it enters the Bay, the Byway provides access to several aquatic environments within this network of waterways. The most prominent, the Potomac River, is home to more than 160 fish species, some of which remain in the brackish Potomac waters year-round and some of which are migratory.<sup>13</sup> Striped bass, spot, croaker, gray trout and white perch are among those that spawn in the Potomac while several anadromous fish species such as shad and herring migrate to the fresh waters of the Potomac's tributaries to spawn.<sup>14</sup>

Given the ecological importance of these tributaries, several have been designated Natural Heritage Areas by the State of Maryland. In Charles County these include Allen's Fresh, Popes Creek, Chicamuxen Creek and Upper Nanjemoy.<sup>15</sup> In St. Mary's County, McIntosh Run, the largest tributary to Breton Bay, has been designated a Natural Heritage Area as well as a significant forest block by the Nature Conservancy. Here, a federally endangered

species, the dwarf wedge mussel, has developed a healthy population, and seven plants growing in the Breton Bay watershed are on the state's list of rare, threatened or endangered species. In addition to the Natural Heritage Area designation, several programs, including Tributary Strategies, Habitat Protection Areas and recovery programs focusing on specific species, aim to protect these waterways and the ecosystems they support.

## Forests

The old growth forests that line the Byway host numerous bird and other woodland species. Prior to European settlement, most of Charles County was covered with forest made up "primarily of hardwoods, including oaks, chestnuts, sweetgum, yellow poplar and beech."<sup>16</sup> Many of these woodlands were cleared for agricultural purposes during the mid-nineteenth century. Today, however, along the Nanjemoy Loop, undisturbed forest still extends out to the Potomac River shoreline. Here in the riparian forests of the Potomac River and Mattawoman Creek, bald eagles nest, making the eagle population of Charles County the second largest in Maryland.<sup>17</sup>

This woodland habitat is also home to ospreys, great blue herons, barred owls and 321 other species, including forest interior nesting birds.<sup>18</sup> Further inland on the forest floor, white-tailed deer, squirrels, rabbits, wild turkeys and other game species make their home.<sup>19</sup>

In addition providing a habitat to a number of animal species, these woodlands are instrumental in maintaining the health of the region's waterways. These forest buffers filter pollutants, reduce erosion and slow runoff from entering streams and creeks.



*Marsh along the Nanjemoy Loop*

Furthermore, their shade helps to maintain cooler water temperatures during the warmer months. While providing habitat to woodland species, these forests protect the habitats of numerous aquatic species.

## Wetlands

Interspersed among forested lands and along waterways, several swamps and marshes offer additional natural resources along the Byway. The marshes of Purse State Park provide habitat for beavers, nesting waterfowl, such as wood ducks, red-headed woodpeckers and other nesting birds, while wetlands along the Chicamuxen and Mattawoman Creeks harbor "rare and endangered species, such as the Louisiana thrush."<sup>20</sup> Recognized as an area of "unique ecological importance by the State of Maryland," the Mattawoman Creek area contains both tidal and non-tidal wetlands, each of which offers different habitats and supports different plant and animal species.<sup>21</sup> The tidal wetlands in this area are of particular importance as nursery areas for a variety of fish species.

Like the Mattawoman, the Zekiah Swamp was designated an Area of Critical State concern in 1981.<sup>22</sup> The Swamp is the largest hardwood swamp in the state and received the "highest rating of all natural areas in the Chesapeake Bay region from the Smithsonian Institution."<sup>23</sup> Known for their unique insect population, the headwaters of the Zekiah Swamp have yielded several specimens that are part of the Smithsonian Institution collection.<sup>24</sup> At the opposite end of the swamp, near Allens Fresh, the salty waters of the swamp mix with the fresh water of the Lower Potomac River. Here both fresh- and saltwater plants thrive.<sup>25</sup>



*Pine forest along the Nanjemoy Loop*



# Religious Freedom Byway

## Management Strategies

This chapter describes the proposed management strategies that are needed to preserve, maintain and/or enhance the intrinsic qualities and the visitor's experience along the Byway. The strategies are organized by major goal.

### **Goal 1: Preserve, Maintain and Enhance the Byway's Character Defining Qualities**

The following describes the recommended strategies for preserving, maintaining and enhancing those qualities.

The Religious Freedom Byway is only a short drive outside of Washington, D.C. and only a few hours from Baltimore and Richmond. While its close proximity to major cities is advantageous in terms of attracting visitors, it also can be a liability in terms of development pressure and suburban growth. Consequently, it is important to develop strategies along the Byway to protect and preserve the intrinsic qualities that make this area unique.

Strategies that are needed to preserve, conserve and maintain the valuable resources along the Byway are determined locally, by Charles and St. Mary's Counties. Possible strategies that can be considered include regulatory programs such as limits on service and infrastructure; transfer of development rights; designated Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas; resource protection standards; corridor overlays (*i.e.* special zoning districts applied to specified areas in addition to existing ordinances); historic preservation plans and guidelines; and incentives for adhering to established guidelines. In addition, local property owners have the option of voluntarily donating conservation easements to the counties. Finally, the purchase of conservation easements is a third possibility through agricultural and forest land protection and easement programs.

Fortunately, Charles and St. Mary's Counties have a number of such programs already in place to help landowners wishing to preserve their lands. The



*Farmland along the Cobb Island Branch*

most important strategy for conserving the intrinsic qualities of the corridor is to further encourage the use of existing, voluntary and non-regulatory measures along the Religious Freedom Byway.

### **Existing Conservation and Historic Preservation Programs**

Existing programs include state and local agricultural land preservation programs, Maryland's Rural Legacy Program, Maryland Environmental Trust's conservation easement program, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area program, National Register and Maryland Inventory of Historic Places, Maryland Historic Preservation Easements, local historic preservation districts.

### **Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program**

According to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation (MALPF) Program, property owners meeting minimum requirements may request formation of an Agricultural Land Preservation District. The minimum requirements include a minimum of 50 acres unless adjoining a property already enrolled in the program and a minimum of 50 percent class I, II or III soils. A number of property owners have formed Agricultural Land Preservation Districts along the Byway as shown on Maps 4 and 5, Byway Conservation.

### **Agricultural Preservation Land Acquisition Program**

Through the Agricultural Preservation Land Acquisition Program, Charles County pledges County dollars to purchase agricultural easements to supplement the Maryland Agricultural Land



Preservation Program. Since 1999, the County has committed approximately \$100,000 each year to this program.

### ***Rural Legacy Areas***

In 1998 the State of Maryland approved Charles County's plan to establish a Rural Legacy Area in the Zekiah Swamp Run Watershed. The Rural Legacy Program, part of Maryland's Smart Growth program, redirects existing state funds into a dedicated land preservation program specifically designed to limit the adverse impacts of sprawl on agricultural lands and natural resources. The funds are used to purchase conservation easements for large contiguous tracts of agricultural, forest and natural areas subject to development pressure, and fee interests in open space where public access and use is needed. The Program is a targeted land preservation effort that is approved through grants from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

### ***Maryland Environmental Trust***

Created in 1967 by the General Assembly to "conserve, stimulate, and perpetuate the state's natural environment," the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) uses tax incentives to preserve land as open space through conservation easements.<sup>26</sup>

### ***The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)***

CREP pays farmers attractive rental rates to plant streamside buffers, create wetlands and provide wildlife habitat on enrolled lands. CREP also includes a conservation easement program that is part of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the United States Department of Agriculture and Maryland. The focus of the MOA is to protect water quality by removing marginal agricultural land from production and replacing it with best management practices including riparian buffers, stabilization of highly erodible soils, and restoration of wetlands. There is a two-tier system to accomplish these water quality improvements. First, the landowner enters into a 15-year lease contract (CREP contract) to take land out of production and to install best management practices for water quality. For some of that land, a second step involves permanently protecting the land taken out of production and the best management practices on it by selling a permanent conservation easement.



*Christ Church, King and Queen Parish, c. 1692*

### ***Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Overlays***

"The Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Overlay implements Comprehensive Plan policies to protect land and water resources in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. The developmental and land use controls within the overlay will minimize adverse impacts on water quality from run off from surrounding lands. It will conserve fish, wildlife, and plant habitat. Finally, this district establishes land use regulations for development that accommodate growth and also address the fact that, even if pollution is controlled, the number, movement, and activities of persons in that area can create adverse environmental impacts."<sup>27</sup>

### ***National Register of Historic Places***

In Maryland, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is administered by the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). Listing in the NRHP establishes certain review requirements for state and federal projects, can lead to preferential treatment in funding programs, and can enable owners of commercial properties to take advantage of significant federal tax incentives for preservation.

### ***Maryland Historic Preservation Easements***

Also administered by the Maryland Historical Trust, the historic preservation easement program preserves historic structures and properties. When an owner donates an easement, he or she gives MHT authority regarding proposed alterations in exchange for income, estate, inheritance, gift and property tax benefits. These easements may be assignable to other parties or remain with the land so that the



*Expansive views enroute to St. George Island*

easement carries over should property owners change.

### ***Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties***

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties is a third program administered by the Maryland Historical Trust. Through this program, MHT maintains county inventories that include historic homes, churches, cemeteries and civic or institutional buildings. Properties listed on the county inventory do not receive any type of protection simply for being listed; however, the resources do serve as a basis for the County in determining its “historic and cultural preservation objectives.”<sup>28</sup>

### ***St. Mary’s County Historic Landmarks and Districts Overlay***

“The Historic Landmarks and Districts Overlay implements Comprehensive Plan policies to recognize the unique contribution of St. Mary’s County to state and national history, including recognition of the County’s distinct rural historic landscape. This overlay promotes the conservation, preservation, protection, and enhancement of historic resources, including sites, structures, and districts significant in history, architecture, archaeology, or culture that serve as visible reminders of the County’s heritage. This overlay district seeks to deter demolition, destruction, alteration, misuse, or neglect of historically, architecturally, archaeologically, or culturally significant sites or structures. By conserving historic resources, the district will preserve and enhance the quality of life and promote the economic prosperity and welfare of the County.”<sup>29</sup>

## ***Proposed Conservation and Historic Preservation Strategies***

The following strategies apply specifically to the Religious Freedom Byway and should be implemented to conserve, preserve and maintain the intrinsic qualities within the Byway corridor. Four primary strategies are proposed:

- Establish conservation priorities in existing comprehensive plans
- Work with existing conservation and historic preservation organizations, to incorporate and where feasible, adopt the Byway’s conservation and preservation priorities
- Establish a single point of contact to monitor conservation and preservation progress and to help educate the public about the benefits of private land stewardship along the byway
- Build upon existing countywide policies to take better advantage of existing policies and programs to preserve historic sites and landscapes
- Adapt St. Mary’s County’s existing design guidelines for historic districts and scenic roads and Charles County’s Site Design and Architectural Review Guidelines for use along the entire byway
- Pursue funding for and implement enhancement projects corridor wide
- Establish a byway landscape committee

### ***Strategy 1.1: Establish Conservation Priorities in Existing Comprehensive Plans***

In order to implement successful conservation and preservation strategies, it is important to recognize the Religious Freedom Byway corridor in each county’s Comprehensive Plans. Official, documented recognition of the Byway demonstrates the significant public benefit of and establishes a conservation purpose for the scenic and historic qualities of the open space lands and historic sites along the Byway. The relationship of the Byway to the surrounding landscape is critical to the Byway experience, and conservation is critical to maintaining that landscape. Each Comprehensive Plan should include:

1. A conservation and preservation priority map showing the locations of significant views and the locations of historic sites that contribute to the intrinsic qualities of the Byway, and
2. Language in the comprehensive plan policy that acknowledges the contribution of the setting to the overall intrinsic quality of the historic sites along the Byway.



The Plan recommends that conservation priorities be established to focus efforts on those lands that are most critical to the continued preservation of the rural and historic character of the Byway. The following criteria were utilized for establishing conservation priorities for the Byway:

1. Sites containing historic, cultural or natural features that contribute to the unique intrinsic qualities along the Byway
2. Lands that are visually prominent as seen from the Byway route
3. Lands that are visually prominent and lands that are the setting or background for the sites and areas at which the goal is to attract visitors, such as visitor centers, historic sites open to the public, existing or proposed pull-off locations and approaches to byway communities
4. Lands adjacent to existing conservation easements, public lands or other lands otherwise protected from further development

In addition to establishing general conservation criteria, several specific sites and scenic views have been identified along the Religious Freedom Byway for conservation priority:

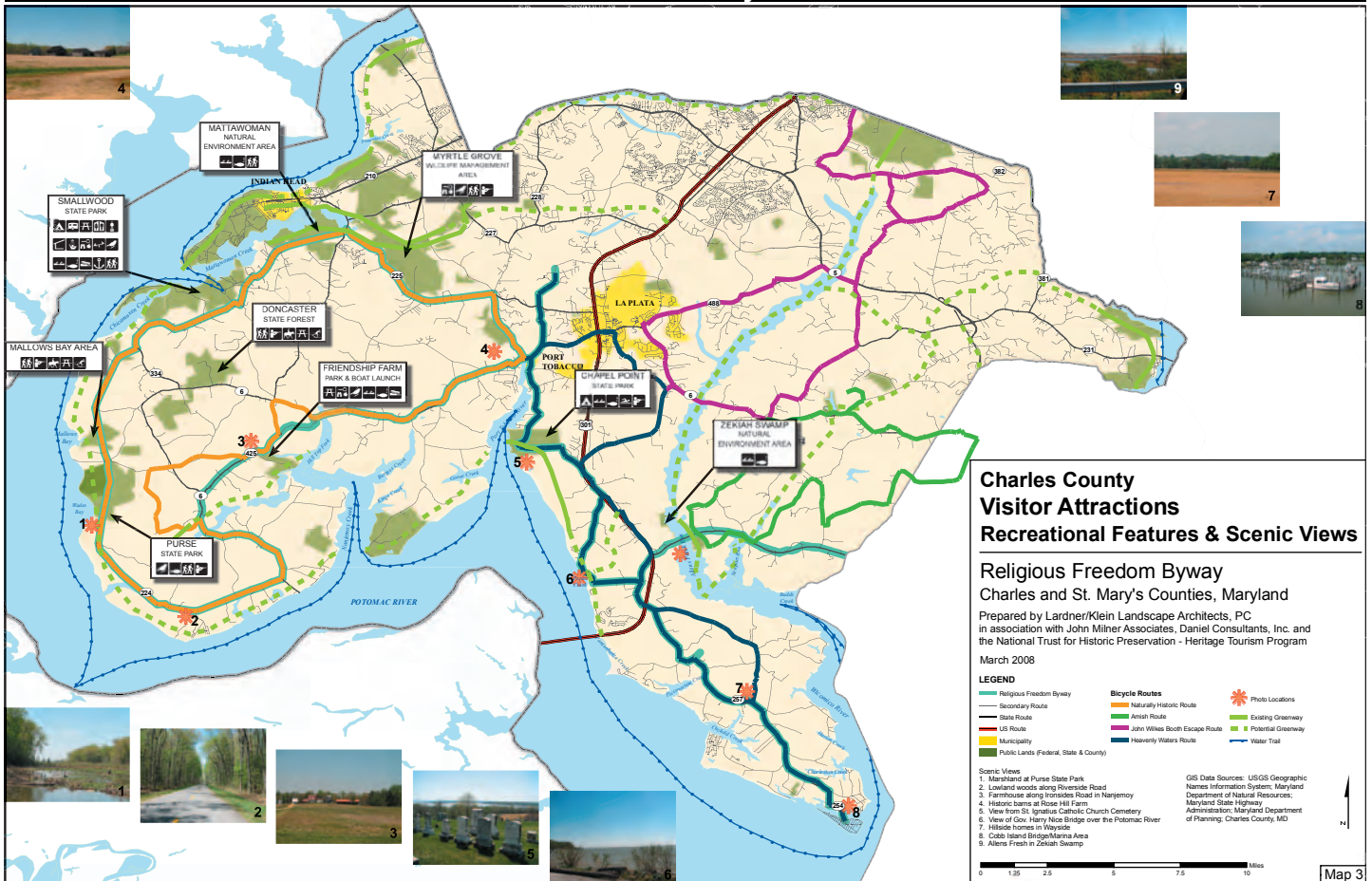
### Charles County

1. Marshland at Purse State Park
2. Lowland woods along Riverside Road
3. Farmhouse along Ironsides Road in Nanjemoy
4. Historic tobacco barns at Rose Hill Farm
5. View from St. Ignatius Catholic Church Cemetery
6. View of Governor Harry Nice Bridge over the Potomac from Popes Creek
7. Hillside homes in Wayside
8. Shymansky's Marina at Cobb Island
9. Allen's Fresh in Zekiah Swamp
10. Rolling hills along MD 234 between Chaptico and Leonardtown

### St. Mary's County

11. Open land in Avenue
12. Colton Point
13. Manor of New Britains at New Town Neck
14. Red barns near Tall Timbers
15. Piney Point Lighthouse and Museum
16. Marshland grasses on St. George Island
17. St. Mary's Lake in St. Mary's River State Park
18. Historic St. Mary's City (setting for entire site)
19. Point Lookout State Park and approach corridor
20. Approach corridor to Sotterley Plantation

## Conservation Priorities: Scenic Views in Charles County







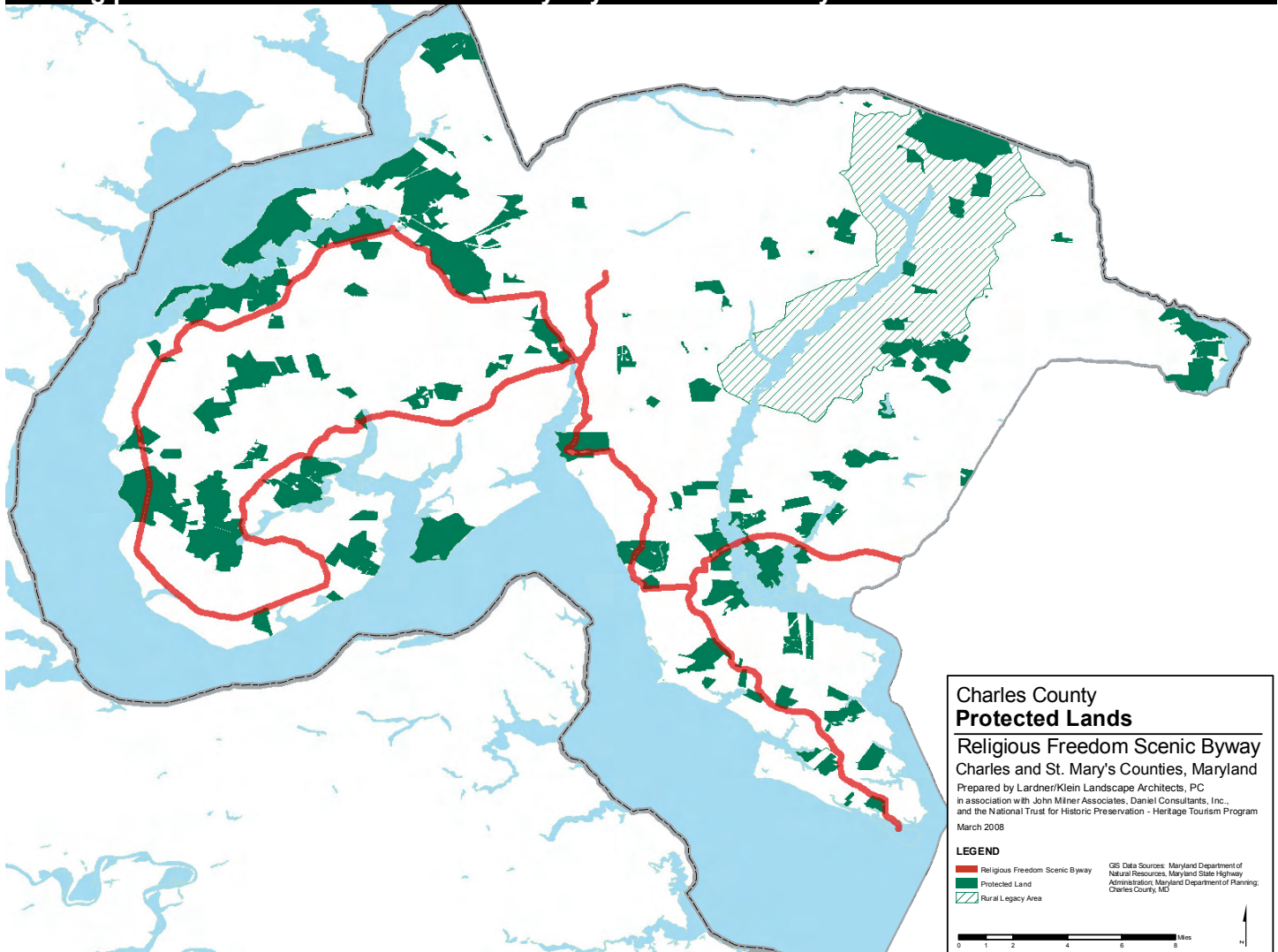
7. Work with the Nature Conservancy to continue preservation of the ecological greenway along Nanjemoy Creek. According to the Maryland DNR Greenway Atlas, "Nanjemoy Creek is a partially established greenways targeted by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the conservation of its unique natural habitat. TNC has established a 973-acre preserve in the upper reaches of Nanjemoy Creek. The preserve protects the largest great blue heron rookery on the East Coast north of Florida. In addition to the rookery, Nanjemoy Creek is habitat for the federally listed dwarf wedge mussel (*Alasmidonta heterodon*). Virginia wild ginger inhabits the uplands along with several trees unusual in coastal Maryland, such as overcup oak and basket oak. To protect the fragile habitat, the preserve is not open to the public except through scheduled TNC field trips. The tidal portions of Nanjemoy Creek are accessible by kayak, canoe, and small boat from

nearby Friendship Landing, where there is also a one-mile shoreline trail."

**Strategy 1.3: Establish a single point of contact to monitor conservation and preservation progress and to help educate the public about the benefits of private land stewardship along the Byway**

Despite their importance, conservation and preservation programs may not be familiar to property owners along the Byway corridor. Consequently, educating the public is critical. Communities should develop byway-specific educational materials and a landowner information package to facilitate the donation of conservation or preservation easements and/or the purchase of such easements through private foundation support. In addition, landowners should be notified of potential preservation opportunities.

**Existing protected lands in relation to the Byway in Charles County**





In order to insure the implementation of existing and proposed preservation and conservation strategies, this plan recommends the appointment of a “Byway Steward.” The Byway Steward would be responsible for monitoring the status of lands and sites identified as conservation and preservation priorities, and for working with land preservation planners, landowners and conservation organizations on the Byway-specific, voluntary conservation and preservation easement program. The Byway Steward would monitor development activity and distribute educational materials to developers, businesses and residents.

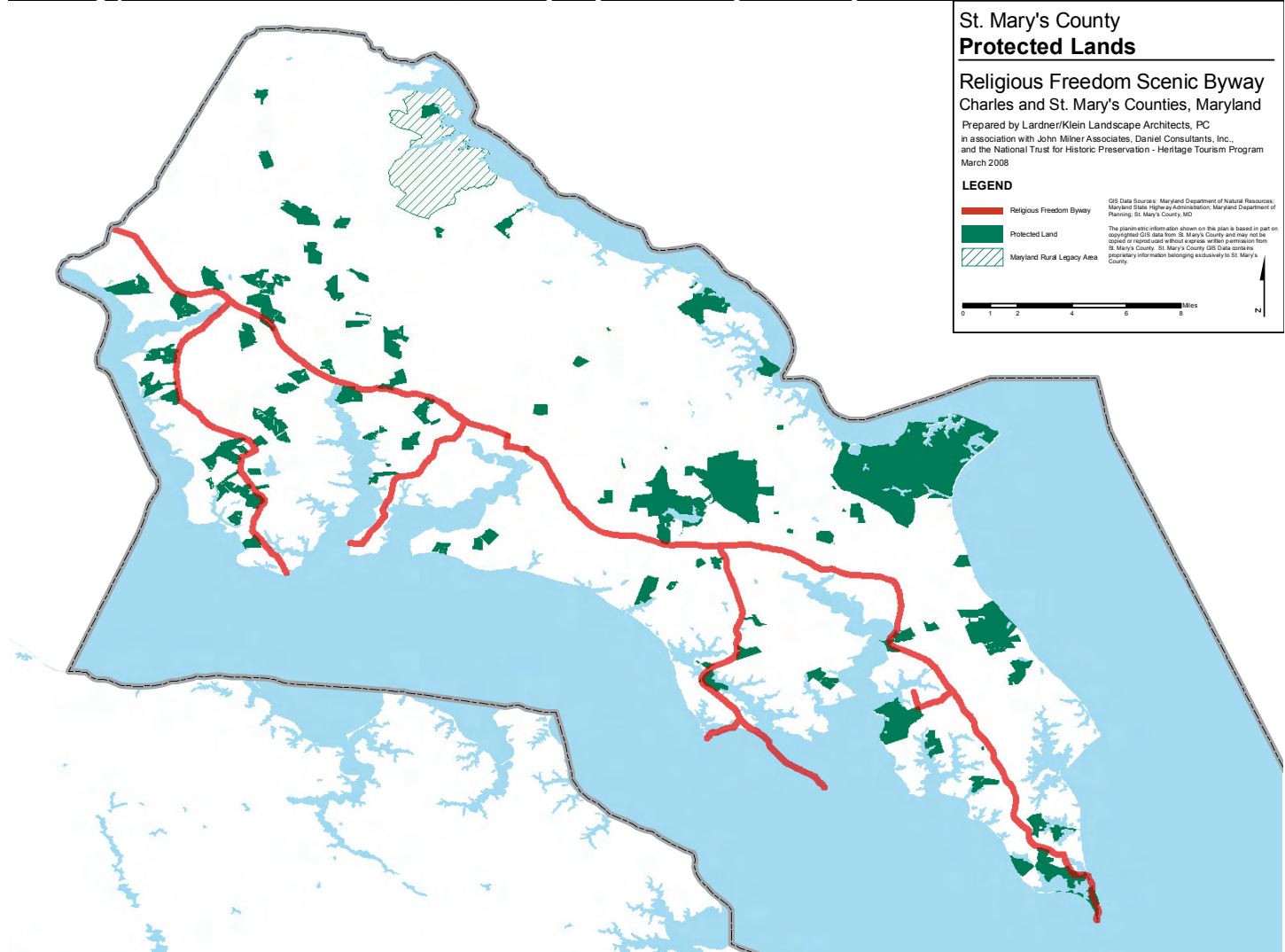
It is recommended that this Byway Steward work through the Southern Maryland Heritage Area (see Chapter 5, Implementation).

#### **Strategy 1.4: Build upon existing countywide policies to take better advantage of existing policies and programs to preserve historic sites and landscapes**

Both Charles and St. Mary’s Counties are “Certified Local Governments” and have historic preservation plans and policies that are supportive of preserving the historic sites and landscapes along the Byway. St. Mary’s County was designated as a “Preserve America” community, a federal designation. Table 1, page 40, describes those policies as they exist at the time of this report (2008).

Stated in the Comprehensive Plan, St. Mary’s County’s goal is to “Preserve the natural, recreational, historical and cultural heritage in conjunction with economic and social well-being to maintain and enhance the quality of life.”<sup>30</sup> The plan goes on to reference as an objective to “Promote

#### **Existing protected lands in relation to the Byway in St. Mary’s County**





































balanced heritage activities and programs that capitalize on the natural, recreational, historical and cultural resources of the county and the region, including the implementation of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area plan.” A series of policies follow related to implementing the preservation goals and objectives. The byway management strategies for conservation and enhancement of intrinsic qualities are consistent with the St. Mary’s County policies and those of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area.

St. Mary’s County has already determined that a large portion of the Byway falls under the jurisdiction of their Design Guidelines (MD 5 and MD 234, Budds Creek Road as well as Mattapony Road that intersects with the Byway).

Similarly, Charles County has adopted goals and objectives in their Comprehensive Plan to “Preserve and enhance the County’s rich cultural and historic heritage” with objectives to “make use of the broad range of preservation tools and strategies,” to “promote incentives to encourage heritage preservation programs and projects,” and to “continue the survey and evaluation of all heritage resources.” The plan references the state programs identified above for recognizing and protecting historic resources, and specifically calls for the adoption of a historic preservation ordinance (specifically calling out Port Tobacco and Bryantown Road area for local historic district designation). In addition, the plan calls for the development of historic preservation design guidelines, to implement the historic preservation ordinance. The plan also calls for the protection of historic resources through the tools available, including “critical historic viewsheds and vistas in Charles County, including the Maryland Scenic Byways Program.”

This plan recommends that Charles and St. Mary’s Counties encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of authentic historic buildings and landscape resources along the Byway through all strategies and actions. Some of this can be accomplished through the existing and proposed historic preservation strategies described in the preceding section.

More resources however, are needed to preserve historic structures and landscapes and provide assistance, especially for such things as emergency repairs and other stabilization needs for the historic sites in the corridor. The following are additional

	Charles Comp. Plan	Charles Hist. Pres. Plan	St. Mary's Comp. Plan	St. Mary's Hist. Pres. Plan
Historic Preservation				
Forested Land Preservation				
Agricultural Land Preservation				
Scenic Byway/Corridor Preservation				
Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation				
Grants/Loans for Historic Preservation				
Cell Tower/Advertisement Billboard Restrictions				
Historic Landscape Preservation				



Included in Comprehensive Plan



Not included in Comprehensive Plan



Under development or very general



Included in Historic Preservation Plan



Not included in Historic Preservation Plan



Under development or very general

**Table 1: Planning and Preservation Policies**

tools and incentives that can be utilized to preserve or adaptively re-use historic structures and districts:

#### *Maryland Capital and Non-Capital Historic Preservation Grant Programs*

Funds are available on a competitive basis to non-profit organizations, local jurisdictions, business entities and individual citizens for capital projects to acquire, rehabilitate or restore eligible projects, i.e., properties listed on, or eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places. The non-capital program funds provide “support for research, survey, planning, and educational activities involving architectural, archeological, or cultural resources. Eligible activities may include preservation plans, architectural, archeological, or cultural resource

surveys, educational outreach programs, and National Register nominations.”

#### *Maryland Rehabilitation Tax Credits*

According to the Maryland Historical Trust: “The Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program, administered by the Maryland Historical Trust, provides Maryland income tax credits equal to 20 percent of the qualified capital costs expended in the rehabilitation of a “certified heritage structure.” (These include individual historic sites or historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places or determined to be eligible for such listing; or a heritage structure or site located in a certified heritage area and certified by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority as contributing to the significance of the certified heritage area.) More information about this program can be found at <http://www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net/taxcr.html>.

#### *Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits*

Also available through the Maryland Historical Trust is access to the Federal program for rehabilitation tax credits. The federal program “enables the owners or long-term lease holders of income-producing certified historic structures (listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or a contributing element within the boundaries of an historic district), to receive a federal tax credit. The credit amounts to 20 percent of the cost of a certified rehabilitation (a rehabilitation that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s “Standards for Rehabilitation”).”

#### *The Historic Preservation Loan Program*

Maryland Historical Trust also manages an Historic Preservation Loan Program. According to MHT, the program “provides loans to nonprofit organizations, local jurisdictions, business entities, and individuals to assist in the protection of historic property. Loan funds can be used to acquire, rehabilitate, or restore historic property listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places. They may also be used for short-term financing of studies, surveys, plans and specifications, and architectural, engineering, or other special services directly related to pre-construction work required or recommended by the Trust or the State Historic Preservation Officer on projects being funded with federal or state monies.”

### **Strategy 1.5: Adapt St. Mary’s County’s existing design guidelines for historic districts and scenic roads and Charles County’s Site Design and Architectural Review Guidelines for use along the entire Byway**

Both the St. Mary’s County and Charles County Comprehensive Plan policies are supportive of the goals to preserve, maintain and enhance the character defining features of the rural and historic landscape that defines the Religious Freedom Byway. Therefore, this plan recommends that the each County take the following steps to implement the corridor plan goals as well as each County’s goals:



A good example of the level of effort that is needed to preserve the historic sites and landscapes along the Byway is the effort to preserve the Tobacco Barns of Southern Maryland. Tobacco barns are a critical part of the Southern Maryland landscape and much effort has taken place in recent years to preserve the remnants of these barns – named one of the eleven most endangered historic sites by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Southern Maryland Tobacco Barns Preservation Initiative was established as a collaborative effort of Preservation Maryland, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Maryland Historical Trust, County governments, heritage tourism organizations, and farm organizations to preserve tobacco barns across the five county region. Funding is still available in the five Southern Maryland counties for preservation of these important historic resources.

[See <http://www.preservationmaryland.org/html/fundingopps.html> for application (typically due in March)]

### St. Mary's County should:

- Extend the application of its existing historic district design guidelines to include the spurs - MD 238/242 to Coltons Point, MD 249 to St. George Island or MD 243 to St. Xaviers Church

### Charles County should:

- Review the guidelines from St. Mary's County and consider adapting them for use along the remaining portions of the scenic byway corridor
- Establish a historic district for Port Tobacco and its historic context as a high priority, with guidelines similar to those in use in St. Mary's County

In areas along the Byway that are more developed (La Plata and Leonardtown), efforts should also be made to enhance the community design efforts so that future development enhances the Byway, rather than detracts from the Byway. In this case Charles County has developed a set of community design guidelines for the US 301 corridor that includes La Plata. St. Mary's County's Preservation Guidelines appear to apply to the Leonardtown area and could also be utilized to improve the future character of the entrances to these important byway communities.

The following outlines the specific needs of the Byway with regard to community design guidelines:

### Urban and Village Sections

- Encourage sidewalks and street trees
- Encourage the use of signs that are in keeping with the adjacent architecture in color, lighting, scale and materials.
- Screen unsightly areas, if needed
- Add crosswalks and landscaped medians to encourage walking
- Consider off street parking behind buildings

- In historic villages be sensitive to the historic period in designing buildings
- In villages site new buildings in keeping with setbacks of existing buildings
- Include bike lanes whenever feasible

### Rural /Suburban Sections

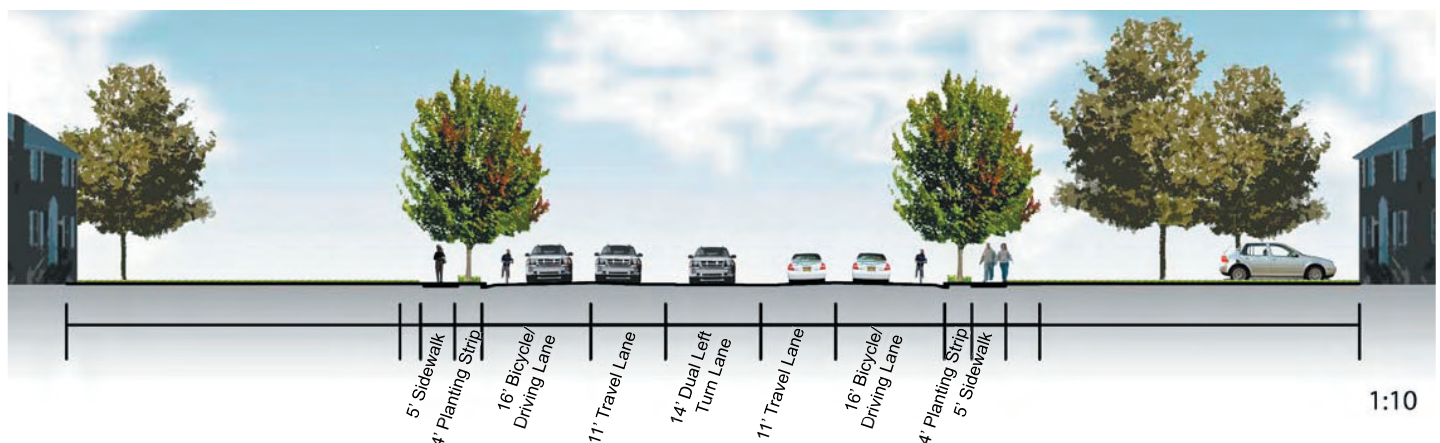
- Encourage compact development patterns to preserve natural areas and rural character
- Retain pastoral character of open scenic areas
- Site new homes and driveways to be less visible from the road, avoiding the ridge lines and open fields and following the contours of the land
- Encourage the use of cluster or open space design patterns to retain open fields and adjacent woodlands while accommodating development
- Encourage the use of narrow access drives to minimize tree clearing
- Work with developers to ensure that gatehouses, fences, and other security measures are appropriately scaled, screened where necessary, and made to fit the historic landscape context
- Encourage the use of vernacular building forms that are compatible with the scale of nearby buildings.
- Prepare a pamphlet to illustrate how to use these types of model development practices

### Strategy 1.6: Pursue funding for and implement enhancement projects throughout the entire corridor

Develop a list of enhancements and pursue funding for those enhancements needed to lengthen visitors' stays and minimize existing intrusions that detract from the special qualities of the Byway.

### Enhancement Projects

Enhancement efforts can have a significant impact on the traveler experience along the Byway. This plan



Typical section for Maryland 5 approaching Leonardtown (see Appendix 3, Concept Plans for more detailed recommendations regarding Leonardtown)



recommends pursuing funding and implementing both small- and large-scale enhancement projects corridor-wide for the locations shown on Map 9, Appendix 4, including

### **Recreational Trail Linkages and Pedestrian Safety**

- Restaurants along water near Popes Creek
- St. Mary's College
- Popes Creek to US 301 Rail Trail - trailhead or other byway related linkage to project in current CIP
- Potomac Heritage Trail - coordinate signage, trailheads, and interpretation with the ongoing planning and implementation of the trail in Charles and St. Mary's Counties

### **Screening and Commercial Corridor Enhancement**

- Power station along Rte 225 (Hawthorne Road) north of intersection with Rte 224 (Livingston Road)
- Power station on Rte 425 just north of intersection with MD 6 (south of Pawlonia Place)
- AT&T tower and facility just west of US 301 on Popes Creek Road
- Power station along Edge Hill Road just west of US 301
- Popes Creek Commercial Area (followup from Waterfront Study)
- Shopping centers along MD 234 (approaching Leonardtown)
- Power station along MD 257 (Cobb Island branch)
- Cobb Island Bridge and marina area – plantings? – awaiting clarification from Beth Clark
- Power station at intersection of MD 238 and 242
- Housing development at intersection of Rte 234 and MD 5 (approaching Leonardtown)
- Commercial development (shopping centers/gas stations) in Callaway area – intersection of MD 5 and MD 249 (Piney Point Road)
- Storage facility and NuStar petroleum facility along Piney Point branch
- Lundeberg School of Seamanship, Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education at Piney Point
- Commercial development (grocery store, hardware store, etc.) just past intersection of MD 235 (Three Notch Road) and MD 5

### **Utilities**

Byway communities should work with their utility companies to minimize the impact of overhead utility wires on roadside vegetation. Possible approaches include

- Placing utility wires underground whenever feasible
- Using alternative spacer bars on wires to reduce pruning requirements

- Considering more frequent pruning to create less of a jarring visual impact
- Using more appropriately sized plant materials when working under a utility line
- Consolidating the number of poles and corridors required by encouraging electric, phone, and cable companies to coordinate
- Preparing landowner/utility company maintenance agreements, if feasible
- Identifying opportunities for utility relocation or underground as part of future construction activities, especially in village and urban areas
- Developing GIS data base so historic trees can be identified to landscape contractors doing pruning
- Creating tree registry using GIS and requiring trees to be pruned by ISA certified arborist giving 3 days notice to property owner and Byway Steward

### **Communication Towers and Utility Corridors**

Both St. Mary's and Charles Counties regulate the construction of communication towers through their existing zoning ordinance pursuant to state and federal laws.

The major issue from the Byway point of view is the scale relationships of the facility with the surrounding context. While there have been serious efforts made at trying to construct "stealth" communication facilities, unless they can be constructed lower, smaller, and in proportion with the kind of architecture found in the area it is nearly impossible to hide them.

Facilities need to be programmed, designed, and sited according to the least visual impact possible. Unfortunately, telecommunication towers require an ability to send signals in an unobstructed straight line. The result is that the preferred sites are usually located on ridgelines or other high points such as church steeples. The companies desiring to construct these towers wish to do so at the lowest economic cost, resulting in the construction of a few taller towers, rather than more frequently spaced shorter towers located at tree line, for example.

For future utility siting issues, whether it is a communication tower, or for a high-voltage electric transmission line, a simple process can be used to ensure that visual impacts are minimized:

- Identify alternative locations, alternative heights, and/or alternative transmission routes. Encourage the sharing of facilities by service providers (saving installation costs, time, and potential legal fees).



*Examples of available technologies to more carefully integrate communication facilities within existing structures. Source: <http://images.businessweek.com/ss/06/08/tower/image/cemetery.jpg> (left); STEALTH® Concealment Solutions, Inc. (middle); Larson Camouflage (right)*

- Describe the visual characteristics of the project for each alternative (e.g. the height of the tower and clearance required for vegetation).
- Determine, for each alternative, the extent of the geographic area from which the proposed facility can be seen (using digital elevation models and viewshed analysis software).
- Use balloon tests to demonstrate the location of towers. Balloons should be flown at the height of the proposed tower and photographs taken from the most visually sensitive locations (as demonstrated in step 3).
- For areas where there is a high degree of concern for the potential visual impacts, such as a panoramic view, use digital editing to superimpose a photograph of a similar type of tower onto the photograph of the balloon taken from the scenic viewpoint (using the balloon for a scale reference).

This approach will provide clear and factual information about both the geographic extent and significance of the visual impacts. By comparing viewshed maps and simulations, the site with the least visual impact can be recommended. If the location or height of the structure cannot be mitigated, a request should be made to use the tower configuration with the least visual contrast possible. The problem with the pine tree camouflage approach that has been used in certain locations, is that the silhouette of the “tree” is often out of scale with the surrounding vegetation. This approach can work if the height of the tower can be lowered to the point where the tower is in scale with its surrounding tree line.

Effort should be made to work with regional partners to establish a design assistance center for providing information and advice to landowners regarding tools and techniques for ensuring that new construction projects help to maintain the character defining features of the Byway. This design assistance could be initiated through existing

programs such as through the National Endowment for the Arts “Your Town: The Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design” program or the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s “Community and Countryside Workshops”. This may help establish a foundation for the design guidance services on a more permanent basis for the Byway and the Southern Maryland region.

#### **Introduction:**

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) develops partnerships with local governments, community organizations and garden clubs for the purpose of beautifying highways and improving the environment. Community gateway plantings, reforestation plantings, streetscapes and highway beautification plantings are examples of the types of projects that have been completed within the Partnership Planting Program.

#### **What To Do:**

Within your community, identify a landscaping need within the right of way of a State Highway. SHA will help you select a site or identify a need near your community if you need assistance. When a site has been selected and meets approval from all parties, SHA will provide a landscape design for the project.

#### **Your Responsibilities:**

Some organizations sponsor plantings by participating in the cost of projects. Others participate by providing volunteers to do the work. These arrangements are decided on a project by project basis. We may also ask for long term support to maintain the project. Planning well in advance is necessary because of the time needed to develop plans, coordinate activities, acquire volunteers and stockpile materials. Often, there is a waiting list for sponsors because of demands on the program.

#### **SHA's Responsibilities:**

SHA will identify a project coordinator to work with the sponsoring organization. We will provide a planting site, a landscape plan, landscape materials and support volunteers on the day of the planting or install the landscaping.

#### **How to Begin:**

Identify a project in which you might be interested and estimate the number of volunteers or funds available for the project. Write to us about your ideas and plans.

From <http://www.sha.state.md.us/ImprovingOurCommunity/oed/partner.asp>

### **Strategy 1.7: Establish a Byway Landscape Committee**

In order to insure proper care and maintenance of the landscaping along the Byway, a Byway Landscape Committee should be established to work with local government, SHA, civic groups and businesses to encourage the establishment or continuation of volunteer planting and maintenance as well as property owner-initiated plantings.

Community members should also take advantage of the SHA Partnership Planting Program excerpted from their web site on page 44.

### **Goal 2: Link the various heritage tourism sites to form a coherent travel experience, telling a story that captures the essence and national significance of the struggles for religious freedom and tolerance**

Consultants for the Byway Management Plan toured the region in June and September to see first-hand the sites that are proposed for inclusion on the Religious Freedom Byway. These visits afforded the opportunity to learn more about the area's history and to understand how the story of the founding of Maryland, as well as the struggle for religious freedom, is connected with other stories and sites along the Byway.

As noted in the Byway Management Plan Request for Proposals (Section C.1.4) Project Description: "The BMP must also develop a coherent plan for telling the powerful stories of Southern Maryland's 400 years including Maryland's beginnings and religious toleration, tobacco culture and its shaping of the rural landscape, war and conflict during the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, and the maritime traditions along the Potomac River."

### **An Overarching Interpretive Theme**

After reviewing the original project description and touring the region, the consultant team agrees that the overarching story to be told is *The Founding of Maryland*

Explained in greater detail in the following section of this chapter, this story is recommended for both

interpretation and marketing purposes for several reasons including

- Knowledge of history – Although travel research shows a large number of tourists are interested in exploring the culture and heritage of the places they visit, there are many studies (including those by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni and the National Assessment of Educational Programs) that have found that students in high school and college do not gain a basic understanding of American history. Further, these studies have found that in recent decades fewer colleges and universities require classes in American history to graduate. (Currently, 78 percent of colleges and universities have no history class requirements.)
- Heritage destinations as primary places to learn about history – With an interest in history but no in-depth knowledge of America's historical events, heritage destinations are becoming one of the primary places that travelers learn about history. This means that interpretation of these destinations must place their stories in historical context with larger national events and must be sure that the stories they tell are authentic and accurate.
- Basis for telling a wider range of stories – By embracing the story of Maryland's founding, opportunities are created to tell a vast array of stories about Southern Maryland. This interpretive approach can reflect the stories of many people who lived in this region for over 400 years in addition to political and military leaders. As stated by author and historian David McCullough: "For a long time, the spotlight was on only a relatively few people – white, male descendants of Western Europeans. Now the lights on the stage are coming up, revealing for the first time all of the others who have been on the stage all the time."
- Broader marketing message – Marketing the Religious Freedom Byway may limit the message to tourists who may perceive its appeal as being primarily for those who are interested in religion or religious history. Considering all of the stories that the region can tell – settlement, the economy, religious freedom and even the Revolutionary War, Civil War and War of 1812 – it becomes clear that every story of Southern Maryland's history



contributed to the larger stories of American history. Using this approach in marketing will enable tourists to more easily feel a connection to these stories and will serve as a call to action to travel to Southern Maryland to explore sites related to these stories.

### **Interpretive Challenges**

Although numerous sites were identified that can tell one or more of the stories of Southern Maryland, some challenges were also apparent. Challenges which will be addressed through the Byway Management Plan process include

- Distance – Driving the beautiful country roads is one of the appeals of traveling in Southern Maryland. However, long driving distances need to be considered as they relate to interpretation.
- Signage – Wayfinding signage is sparse and often unclear. Signage is addressed in greater detail starting on page 79 of the Byway Management Plan.
- Hours/Days/Months of Operation – Many sites have limited hours, days and months of operation. These are noted in the following section for identified interpretive sites and will have an impact on who can visit and when.
- Locked Sites – Some of the churches along the Byway route were open to the public. However, other churches identified along the existing route were locked and inaccessible to visitors. Destinations that don't offer a real visitor experience are not appealing and site constraints associated with visitor appeal will need to be considered as part of the interpretive planning process.

### **Proposed Interpretive Themes and Program**

The Religious Freedom Byway will implement an interpretive program that links existing visitor attractions with new interpretive sites along the Byway through the story of America's First Right and the quest for religious tolerance in Colonial America, for which the region is historically significant and renowned. The theme will cover the period of Maryland's colonial history spanning from Native American occupation, through initial settlement in 1634, to the period of the American Revolution. Interpretation will focus on the historic intrinsic quality of the Byway as discussed in Chapter 3 and will be closely supported by its scenic, recreational, cultural, and archeological qualities.

The Religious Freedom Byway follows the course of the western shore of the Potomac River from the vicinity of Indian Head and the Nanjemoy loop in western Charles County to the Point Lookout peninsula in St. Mary's County, where the Potomac River meets the Chesapeake Bay. Side tracks from the main byway route extend down the smaller peninsulas to Cobb Island, St. Clement Island, Newtowne Neck, and Piney Point/St. George Island.

The Byway will link existing, high-quality visitor attractions that currently interpret Maryland's colonial past, including

- Thomas Stone National Historic Site,
- St. Clement Island Potomac River Museum,
- Historic St. Mary's City, and
- Sotterley Plantation.

Additional interpretive sites have been identified along the Byway, including several existing smaller, high quality attractions and a number of new interpretive sites that will be self-guided. Interpretation at all of the sites will be coordinated into a comprehensive and interconnected whole using site specific resources and stories to relate byway-wide themes. This interpretation will be supported by byway-wide interpretive and marketing materials and initiatives. The Religious Freedom Byway will be the featured attraction of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area.

### **Interpretive Themes**

Interpretive themes are the central concepts or ideas that are important about a subject and give it meaning and significance. This chapter outlines a framework of suggested themes, sub-themes, and interpretive subjects that can be used to tell the Byway's story of the colonial experience of Southern Maryland. The proposed thematic framework is broad and comprehensive enough to tell the full story and to embrace all of the potential interpretive sites along the Byway. Each interpretive site should identify the themes to which it best relates and which best convey the ideas associated with its stories and resources; each site should look at its stories and resources to determine how best they relate to the Byway's interpretive themes.

Themes should be used to develop interpretive exhibits and supporting materials at each individual site as well as to link and coordinate all of the sites

along the Byway. The stories associated with a site should be selected for use in interpretation as illustrations of specific byway themes. In planning a set of interpretive exhibits, a thematic statement should be prepared for each exhibit conveying its primary point, idea, or purpose. Exhibit content should then be developed to illustrate that point. The sequence of ideas between associated exhibits should be combined to relate a larger idea or theme. The theme statement for each individual exhibit should clearly relate to the larger themes of the site and to the themes of the Byway as a whole.

In developing interpretation for the Byway, it is recommended that a comprehensive interpretative plan be prepared based upon this Byway Management Plan. Implementation of the plan should be phased. Each potential interpretive site along the Byway should be reviewed; its history, significance, and stories identified; and its relationship to the Byway's thematic framework established. Interpretation, site-by-site, should be developed in a holistic manner, linking themes, storylines, and interpretive presentations at individual sites into a comprehensive whole. The following themes are recommended for the Byway.

#### *Primary Interpretive Theme and Sub-Themes:*

### **America's First Freedom: The Quest for Religious Tolerance**

*The establishment of a colonial settlement on the shores of the Potomac River was a bold endeavor fraught with difficulties. Among the four earliest English settlements along the east coast of North America, the original vision for the colony introduced the concepts of religious tolerance and the separation of church and state to North America. Though overwhelmed at the time by religious rivalry and conflict, these concepts later became founding principles of the United States Constitution, documented in the First Amendment.*

#### Sub-Theme 1:

### ***Drawn by the Water and the Land***

*The characteristics of the landscape created opportunities for human occupation and cultural development. The ways that Native Americans used, managed, and conceived of the landscape were vastly different from those of the English colonists.*

#### Interpretive Subjects:

- *Ecology of the Lower Potomac River: natural history of the Potomac and Chesapeake*
- *Before the Fall: land use and ecology of the Piscattaway and related tribes before 1634*
- *Europeans Divide the Land: land use and ecology of colonial settlement, 1634 to 1783*

#### Sub-Theme 2:

### ***Struggling to Establish a Colony***

*The colony in Maryland was unique in the American experience in its conception, in the peoples attracted to it, and in the manner in which it developed. Maryland's early settlement period, from 1633 to 1689, was fraught with challenges.*

#### Interpretive Subjects:

- *The Vision of Lord Baltimore: a place of stability and prosperity*
- *English and Catholic: a practical program of survival in avoiding religious conflict*
- *Separation of Church and State: a new idea is introduced*
- *The Manor System: a feudal system to promote stability*
- *The Challenge of Recruitment: who came and why*
- *Challenges at Court: fending off repeated political challenges in England*
- *Absentee Management: the colonial government develops a mind of its own*
- *Realities on the Land: things were vastly different and more difficult than expected*
- *Conversion and Decimation: the Piscattaway disappear*
- *Religious and Political Conflict: competition, uprising and rebellion*
- *Foundations of Catholicism: the Catholic experience in the New World*
- *Co-opting the Colony: the Protestant Revolution of 1689 ends it*

#### Sub-Theme 3:

### ***Tobacco – The Economic Foundation of a Colony***

*The colony in Maryland was dependant upon the cultivation and export of tobacco. Growth and prosperity ebbed and flowed with the strength and weakness of the markets for tobacco in Europe. Tobacco cultivation shaped the land use, social structure, and culture in the developing colony.*

*Plantation culture and dependence upon an enslaved workforce tied Southern Maryland to the South.*

Interpretive Subjects:

- *Creating a Prosperous Economy*: tobacco was the foundation of the colonial economy
- *International Export*: the direct ties from river wharfs to European markets
- *Cultivating Tobacco*: how tobacco is grown
- *The Plantation Landscape*: a dispersed, disheveled, and ephemeral landscape character
- *Indentured Servants to Slavery*: dependence upon an enslaved workforce
- *Port Towns*: towns were slow to develop
- *Ties to the South*: the profound impacts of a tobacco plantation culture

Sub-Theme 4:

### **Colonial Maryland Comes of Age**

*By the early eighteenth century, many of the challenges of the early settlement period had been resolved. Second generation colonists were acclimated to lowland diseases, stable family groups were formed, and a social hierarchy was established. Agriculture diversified and more permanent plantation centers and landscapes were developed. Maryland participated in an evolving national consciousness.*

Interpretive Subjects:

- *Colonial Stability*: time led to a more stable social and economic system
- *Leading Families*: a hierarchy of leading families develops
- *The Episcopal Triumph*: a state-sponsored church is established
- *A Mature Plantation Landscape*: architecture, agriculture, and land use
- *A Revolutionary Generation*: participating in creating a nation

### **Interpretive Sites**

A series of sites have been identified to participate in the interpretation of the Byway. These sites range from existing, full-service visitor attractions, to smaller scale non-profit attractions, to historic sites that can be used for self-guided interpretation. In implementing the Byway Management Plan, the responsible party associated with each site is being contacted (if they are not already involved) and invited to participate in the Byway program. The sites have been divided into two groups, Anchor Sites and Byway Interpretive Sites based upon their current level of programming and available visitor services.

### **Byway Anchor Sites**

Four sites have been identified as Anchor Sites along the Byway. These Anchor Sites are existing visitor attractions that currently offer a full-service, professional visitor experience that includes (a) interpretation through indoor and outdoor exhibits, (b) guided or self-guided tours, (c) living history presentations, and (d) special educational events and programs. The Anchor Sites are open to the public six or seven days a week during the visitor season (May through October), have a full time professional staff, have on-site visitor services, and have a marketing budget and marketing expertise. All of the sites interpret stories, resources, and themes associated with the themes of the Byway. While four Anchor Sites are currently identified, additional sites may be added in the future as existing sites meet the visitor experience and services criteria outlined above. The current Anchor Sites include



**1. Thomas Stone National Historic Site,**  
6655 Rose Hill Road, Port Tobacco  
<http://www.nps.gov/thst/index.htm>

Site Open: Year-round; Memorial Day – Labor Day:  
Monday-Sunday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Labor  
Day – Memorial Day: Wednesday-  
Sunday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (closed Monday  
and Tuesday)

**Site Characteristics :**

- The story – The National Park Service interprets the site as the home of Thomas Stone, a prominent resident of Maryland during the mid-to-late eighteenth century, one of four Maryland signers of the Declaration of Independence, and a member of the Continental Congress. For the purposes of the Byway, of primary interest are the relationship of Thomas Stone and his family in the social, political, and economic development of the region from early settlement through the Revolution. Thomas Stone was a third generation colonist, and his grandfather was colonial governor in St. Mary's City during the turbulent period of the 1650s. The evolution of the Thomas Stone property from early settlement through the period of the Revolution is of interpretive interest to the Byway.
- The site – Introductory film and exhibits, plantation house, 19<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings.
- The current visitor experience – Story is told through film, exhibits and guided tours.
- Visitor services – Visitor center with rest rooms and gift shop.



*Haberdeventer, restored plantation home at Thomas Stone National Historic Site*

**Recommendation:**

The Thomas Stone National Historic Site is important not only because of its stories and themes, but because of the quality of the interpretive experience presented here. The byway should work with the National Park Service to strengthen the relationship between interpretation at the site and byway themes. An interpretive kiosk should be installed outside of the visitor center providing information about the Byway and outlining the site's byway-related themes. Park Service employees should be ambassadors for the Byway.

**2. St. Clement's Island – Potomac River Museum,**  
38370 Point Breeze Road, Coltons Point  
[www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate/museums/stclementsland.asp](http://www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate/museums/stclementsland.asp)

Site Open: Year-round; March 25 – Sept;  
weekdays 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Saturday-  
Sunday, 2 - 5 p.m.; Oct 1- March 24  
– Wednesday- Sunday, noon – 4 p.m.  
Grounds and St. Clement's Island  
State Park open year round sun rise to  
sun set.

Water Taxis: Memorial Day weekend – end of Oct;  
Saturday – Sunday, noon – 4 p.m.

**Site Characteristics:**

- The story – Founding of Maryland, early settlement, river heritage, religious freedom and toleration. The museum focuses squarely upon the recommended byway themes and is a key interpretive site.
- The site – Exhibits tell Maryland's early colonial story and connect it to larger national themes of the country's settlement.
- The Island – A Maryland state park with two public piers, picnic facilities, rest rooms, self-guided interpretive signage, a religious monument, the 1851 Blackstone Lighthouse and extensive landscape plantings.
- The current visitor experience – Self-guided tour through exhibits, grounds and Island park site; water taxi rides to St. Clements Island from Memorial Day weekend to the end of October (weather permitting); annual special events.
- Visitor services – Rest rooms, picnic areas, public pier, tourism information services, bottled water and light snacks for sale in museum store, pre-arranged group tours available.



*St. Clements Island Museum*

**Recommendation:**

St. Clement's Museum is a Chesapeake Bay Gateway Site and offers a visitor experience important to the Byway. The Byway should assist the museum with its interpretive mission and presentation and link interpretation at the museum with interpretation at other byway sites. An interpretive kiosk should be installed outside the museum providing information about the Byway and outlining the site's byway-related themes. Museum employees should be ambassadors for the Byway.

### 3. Historic St. Mary's City,

Route 5, St. Mary's City

[www.stmaryscity.org](http://www.stmaryscity.org)

Site Open: March – November (variable seasonal hours)

#### Site Characteristics:

- The story – St. Mary's City is an interpretive touchstone of the Byway. It was the initial settlement, the first capital of Maryland, and the fourth permanent settlement in North America. St. Mary's was the focal point for the early settlement of Maryland, and it is related to all of the Byway's interpretive themes.



*Historic St. Mary's City*

- The site – Reconstructed buildings; tobacco plantation; archaeological sites; Dove ship; museum with interpretive exhibits and film; reconstructing chapel (in progress).
- The current visitor experience – Living history at tobacco plantation and other sites, hands on activities, special events, visitor center and exhibit hall.
- Visitor services – Gift shop, snacks at visitor center, rest rooms at visitor center, meals available at college student center.

#### Recommendation:

From interpretive and visitor experience perspectives, the Byway leads visitors from the population center of the DC metropolitan area to St. Mary's City. Interpretive sites along the Byway should relate, illustrate, and prepare visitors for the culminating interpretive experience presented at St. Mary's. The byway should support the mission and interpretive presentation at St. Mary's and help coordinate its presentation with byway themes. An interpretive kiosk should be installed outside of the visitor center providing information about the Byway and outlining the site's byway-related themes. Museum employees should be ambassadors for the Byway.

### 4. Sotterley Plantation,

Route 245 (Sotterley Road), Hollywood

[www.sotterley.com](http://www.sotterley.com)

Site Open: Grounds open year-round, Tuesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Manor House tours, May – October.

#### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Colonial port of entry, tobacco plantation, slavery. Sotterley Plantation is closely related to the Byway's themes on the founding of Maryland and tobacco culture.
- The site – Plantation house, eighteenth century warehouse, smokehouse, nineteenth century slave quarter, plantation school.
- The current visitor experience – Professional-quality interpretation and programming.
- Visitor services – Museum store, rest rooms.

#### Recommendation:

Sotterley Plantation has a high quality visitor experience and is a key site that should be included within the Byway. At no other place can the story of an early tobacco plantation be better or more completely told. The byway should support the site's mission and presentation and should coordinate its themes and stories with those of the plantation. An interpretive kiosk should be installed at the site providing information about the Byway and outlining the site's byway-related themes. Site employees should be ambassadors for the Byway.

#### Potential Anchor Sites:

These sites may be considered for anchor sites if upgrades are made [See each site for description.]:

- Port Tobacco
- Smallwood's Retreat
- Point Lookout State Park

## Byway Interpretive Sites

Byway Interpretive Sites are key interpretive locations along the Byway that are publicly accessible and will present exhibits related to identified byway themes. Most Byway Interpretive Sites will be self-guided, though some sites have limited hours of operation and are available for pre-scheduled visits. While some sites have existing exhibits presenting the history of their locations, others currently have no interpretation. Partnering relationships with the owners and managing entities of all the sites will be developed to support the existing goals and missions of the sites and their organizations.

Each of the Byway Interpretive Sites has the potential to be enhanced through the use of interpretive media including interpretive waysides, customized exhibits, or audio-tour to help present the story of the Byway. Potential stories at each site will be identified and related to the Byway themes of colonial Maryland and the tobacco plantation culture. Interpretation to be implemented at each site will be linked to interpretation at other sites in a coherent and easily perceived manner. From west to east, the proposed Byway Interpretive Sites include the following:

### 1. Mount Carmel Monastery,

Mt. Carmel Drive, La Plata

<http://users.erols.com/carmel-of-port-tobacco/index.html>

Site Open: May-October 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.;  
Services Saturday and Sunday: 8:00 a.m.; Services weekdays: 7:15 a.m.  
Gift shop: open 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. daily

#### Site Characteristics:

- The story – First religious community for women in America (1790)
- The site – Two of the original convent buildings are restored and open for tours.
- The current visitor experience – Visitors can attend services as well as tour the property. There is a historical marker sign on the property. Restored building could have additional interpretation.
- Visitor services – One building houses a gift shop and rest rooms.



*Chapel at Mt. Carmel Monastery*

#### Recommendation:

Assist the Monastery in its interpretive presentation and the stewardship of its historic building. Install self-guided exhibits. Relate the story of the Monastery to the interpretive themes of the Byway through the religious themes associate with early settlement and the plantation culture of the eighteenth century, particularly the *Foundation of Catholicism*. The early settlement history of the land on which the monastery stands, predating 1790, should also be investigated for possible interpretation.



## 2. Smallwood Retreat House,

Smallwood State Park, Marbury

[www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/smallwood.html](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/smallwood.html)

Site Open: April – mid-October, Sunday, 1 – 5 p.m.

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Home of General William Smallwood, a major general in the American Revolution; governor of Maryland; tobacco plantation. Manor site during early settlement.
- The site – Smallwood's house, reconstructed tobacco barn with a tobacco exhibit; state park offers camping and recreational facilities.
- The current visitor experience – Very limited hours of operation, no interpretation provided when the site is not open. (Extent of interpretation done in the house or in the barn is unknown).
- Visitor services – Public rest rooms on nearby park lands, picnic facilities nearby, playground nearby.



*Smallwood's Retreat*

## 3. Purse State Park,

Riverside Road, Nanjemoy

Site Open: Daylight hours

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Ecology of the Potomac River watershed and the interface between land and water
- The site – State park with related open space and trail access to river
- The current visitor experience – No current interpretation
- Visitor services – Parking and trails under construction



*Trailhead at Purse State Park*

### Recommendation:

Work with the state to develop self-guided interpretation along the trails being constructed in the park. Relate interpretation of the ecology of the region to the historical themes of the Byway. Specific themes and stories need to be developed based upon the resources on the site. Native American occupation could be an appropriate subject.

### Recommendation:

Support the interpretive presentation at the site related to General Smallwood and the tobacco plantation. Install a byway kiosk and self-guided interpretive exhibits that help coordinate interpretation with the themes of the Byway. Begin with the establishment of a manor on the site during early settlement and the historical development of the property into Smallwood's plantation. For the purposes of the Byway, focus upon the organization and workings of the plantation. Install wayfinding signage from the park entrance to the parking area near the tobacco barn and plantation house. Smallwood Retreat House has the potential to become a future Anchor Site.

#### 4. Douglas Point, Chiles Home Site, Riverside Road, Nanjemoy

Site Open: Daylight hours

##### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Patent for an early plantation dating to 1653; part of the Zekiah Manor; property owned by John Hoskin Stone, brother of Thomas Stone, in late eighteenth century; home built in 1790 by Capt. Francis Shepard, friend of John Stone; later owned by Reverend William Chiles.
- The site – Natural area with trails being constructed.
- The current visitor experience – Self-guided walking trail with five interpretive waysides at Shepard/Chiles homesite.
- Visitor services – None.

##### Recommendation:

Develop additional interpretive waysides to elaborate on the early settlement history of the site, including the Zekiah Manor and the ownership and use of the site in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Existing interpretive waysides are well-done and support byway themes.

#### 5. Friendship Farm Park, Ironsides Road, Nanjemoy

Site Open: Daylight hours

##### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Plantation; Native American occupation; ecology
- The site – County park with related open space and visitor amenities.
- The current visitor experience – Limited wayside signage at existing cellar; agricultural buildings and ruins; extensive trail network.
- Visitor services – Orientation, portable rest rooms, recreational facilities, boat launch



*View from Friendship Farm Park*

##### Recommendation:

Friendship Farm Park is the site of an early plantation and wharf that has been the subject of historical research. Additional research and a long-term program of archeological investigations is recommended. The site has strong potential for interpretation of the early settlement period and changes through to the period of the revolution. An existing cellar hole was the site of an eighteenth century hall and parlor dwelling that was relocated to the College of Southern Maryland and restored. New wayside exhibits and interpretive brochures are recommended.

## 6. Old Durham Church, Ironsides Road, Nanjemoy

Site Open: Open daily year-round; Services at 11 a.m. on Sunday (10 a.m. July and August)

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – One of the original 30 churches chartered in the Province of Maryland by the Colonial Assembly in 1692; cemetery with many individuals of interest; location to relate settlement story of its vicinity.
- The site – Church building dates to 1732. Cemetery beside the church. Historical plaques posted on church building (behind the bushes).
- The current visitor experience – Sanctuary is open.
- Visitor services – None.



*Old Durham Church*

### Recommendation:

Old Durham Church has the potential to tell the story of the establishment of the Episcopal Church as the state sponsored church of the colony following the Revolution of 1689 and the overthrow of Lord Baltimore's proprietorship. In addition, the site can use the stories of individuals buried in its cemetery to relate stories of the colonial culture and history. The development history of the vicinity around the church should also be related. Wayside and other possible exhibits are recommended.

## 7. Port Tobacco Historic District, Route 6, West [www.porttobaccoblogspot.com](http://www.porttobaccoblogspot.com)

Site Open: Courthouse: April – October; 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Sat, Sun and Mon.; One Room School: April – October; 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Sat and Sun; Also open on Monday, June – August

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Native American settlement; original county seat; Civil War history
- The site – Reconstructed Courthouse offers museum exhibits; surrounding village buildings viewed from exterior; interpretive wayside signs tell Civil War story
- The current visitor experience – Open limited hours. There is limited outdoor interpretation on the site through wayside exhibits and plaques.
- Visitor services – Public rest rooms when open.



*Reconstructed Courthouse at Port Tobacco*

### Recommendation:

Port Tobacco is a key interpretive site along the Byway. Its history is currently being studied through archeological investigations and research. The actual layout and full extent of the town is not apparent from current buildings, roads, and exhibits. Exhibit plans for the museum have been developed and, in part, implemented. Additional planning needs to be undertaken to expand the outdoor exhibits, for which there is great potential. At present, only a small portion of land is owned by the non-profit organization that manages the courthouse museum. Additional land has been identified for purchase. Port Tobacco has the potential to become an Anchor Site for the Byway. Additional planning should be undertaken for the phased development of its interpretive visitor experience.



## 8. St. Thomas Manor (Chapel Point; St. Ignatius Church),

Chapel Point Road, Port Tobacco

Site Open: Open daily year-round;  
Mass at 8 a.m., Monday – Friday;  
Services at 5 p.m. Saturday; 7:30 a.m.,  
9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday.

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Nation's oldest active parish; founded in 1641; Jesuit residence since 1741; site of historic St. Thomas Manor.
- The site – Church, manor house and servant house; large cemetery; site is on a 120-foot bluff overlooking the mouth of the Port Tobacco River where it joins the Potomac.
- The current visitor experience – Sanctuary is open. Existing interpretive waysides are located in the front of the church. Church cemetery.
- Visitor services – informal, if open. Visitors and bicyclists welcomed.



*St. Thomas Manor, Chapel Point Road*

### Recommendation:

In addition to its dramatic view and historic buildings, Chapel Point has an extremely interesting and significant story as an early Jesuit manor that developed over the entire colonial period interpreted by the Byway. Chapel Point State park surrounds the site. An interpretive plan for the property should be developed that combines exhibits at the church with walking trails that offer exhibits interpreting the manor and its workings. This site is important to the Byway and should receive special attention.

## 9. Christ Episcopal Church, 25390 Maddox Road (Route 238), Chaptico

Site Open: Sanctuary is open daily, year-round.  
Services at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. on  
Sunday, Wednesday at 7 a.m. Summer  
schedule 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. July 1<sup>st</sup>  
through Labor Day.

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Parish established in 1692; church built in 1736; involved in War of 1812; members of Francis Scott Key family buried in Key family vault.
- The site – Church and cemetery.
- The current visitor experience – Church is open with a self guided tour. Cemetery surrounds church building.
- Visitor services – None.



*Christ Episcopal Church at dusk*

### Recommendation:

Christ Episcopal Church is located at an important point along the Byway, half way between Chapel Point and Leonardtown. Because of the length of this stretch of roadway, it is important to develop meaningful interpretation at this site to make the trip worthwhile. Interpretation should focus not only on the church, but on the development history of this stretch of land in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries during which period Chaptico was an important port of entry on Chaptico Bay. Manors, plantations, and wharf sites should be identified and their stories told. Individuals buried in the cemetery should be used to tell the eighteenth century story. Themes, stories, and interpretive media need to be identified.

## 10. St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Newtowne Neck Road, Leonardtown

Site Open: Sanctuary is open

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Oldest Roman Catholic Church in Maryland, dating to 1640; church built in 1766; early story reflects religious intolerance against Catholics; was a self-contained Jesuit community.
- The site – Church has unusual architectural features; empty manor house (in need of work) stands behind church, surrounded by open land.
- The current visitor experience – Sanctuary is open; historic marker is at the entrance.
- Visitor services – None



*St. Francis Xavier Church, Newtowne Neck*

### Recommendation:

Like Christ Episcopal Church, St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church is located at an important site along the Byway. It is the only currently identified interpretive site along the Newtowne Neck sidetrack of the Byway. It is important to develop meaningful interpretation at the site to make the trip down the sidetrack worthwhile. Like Christ Episcopal Church, interpretation should focus not only on the church and Catholic themes, but on the development history of the neck in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Manors, plantations, and wharf sites should be identified and their stories told. Themes, stories, and interpretive media need to be identified.

## 11. Leonardtown

Site Open: Tudor Hall/Historical Society  
41680 Tudor Place,  
Open Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.; Research library open Thursday, Friday, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Saturdays; open by appointment on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays; Open Monday-Wednesday by appointment)

St. Mary's County Courthouse  
41605 Courthouse Drive  
Open Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Old Jail Museum/Visitors Center  
41680 Tudor Place  
Open Wednesday-Friday, Noon-2 p.m.

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Tidewater plantation; county seat after St. Mary's; Civil War connections
- The site – Historic town with specific visitor sites as well as a general walking tour of significant historic buildings located throughout town.
- The current visitor experience – Self-guided tour through town includes 21 properties, film at historical society as well as a guided tour of Tudor Hall, outdoor wayside exhibit at Tudor Hall (historical society), interpretation at Museum.
- Visitor services – The Old Jail visitor information center with limited hours/days of operation; rest rooms available in surrounding businesses within town.



*Leonardtown, Maryland*

### Recommendation:

Leonardtown is the only incorporated town that is part of the Byway. It is important not only for its interpretive potential but also for its visitor services, primarily restaurants. Interpretation of the town could be undertaken by the historical society and partners. The byway should support their initiatives and incorporate them into its interpretive program.

## 12. St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church, Poplar Hill Lane, Valley Lee

Site Open: Open for tours by request. Call 301-994-0585 or 301-994-9122.

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Church established in 1692; seventh Episcopal Parish in Maryland; William and Mary Parish established in 1638.
- The site – Church and cemetery.
- The current visitor experience – Must call for appointment for tours.
- Visitor services – None.



*St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church*

### Recommendation:

St. George's is located off of the Piney Point sidetrack of the Byway and can contribute to the interpretive experience of the route. Like other churches along the Byway, interpretation should focus not only upon the church and religious themes, but upon the development history of the land around it in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Manors, plantations, and wharf sites should be identified and their stories told. Themes, stories, and interpretive media need to be identified.

## 13. Cecil's Mill Historic District, Indian Bridge Road, Great Mills

Site Open: March – October, Thursday-Sunday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; daily, November – Christmas Eve, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – One of Maryland's first industrial districts. Originally a textile factory (1810) to process cotton.
- The site – The mill and the general store are used as shops for local arts and crafts, and other souvenirs and collectibles are for sale.
- The current visitor experience – Primarily shopping; little interpretation.
- Visitor services – None

### Recommendation:

Cecil's Mill is historically significant, but its nineteenth century industrial history does not relate directly to the Byway period and themes. Its story, however, should certainly be told. Investigation should be taken into subjects related to the Byway themes that could be told at this location. Visitor services should be expanded to include public rest rooms, a visitor information kiosk, and food services to augment existing shopping and the arts.



#### 14. Piney Point Lighthouse, Museum and Historic Park,

44720 Lighthouse Road, Piney Point

[www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate/museums/stclementsland.asp](http://www.co.saint-marys.md.us/recreate/museums/stclementsland.asp)

**Site Open:** Museum open, April – October, Friday through Monday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; November and December, weekends until Christmas 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Grounds open year-round sunrise to sunset.

##### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Lighthouse was a beacon for boats and ships traveling the Potomac. Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay maritime history.
- The site – 1836 lighthouse and keeper's quarters, Potomac River Maritime Exhibit Building and Museum. Exhibits and interpretive signage share the story of navigation on the Potomac from pre-colonization to current day commerce.
- The current visitor experience – Museum buildings and lighthouse open regular hours; Boardwalk to lighthouse and associated buildings lined with small exhibits and interpretive panels. Tours and self guided opportunities. Annual special events.
- Visitor Services – Rest rooms, picnic area, public pier, tourism information services, bottled water and light snacks for sale in museum store. Prearranged group tours available.



*Piney Point Lighthouse*

#### 15. Trinity Episcopal Church,

Trinity Church Road, St. Mary's City

**Site Open:** Sanctuary is typically open during daytime hours; Grounds and cemetery are always accessible.

##### Site Characteristics:

- The story – On land associated with founding of Maryland, associated with first state capital; religious toleration.
- The site – Church building, cemetery, and path down to waterfront and Church Point.
- The current visitor experience – Little interpretation – original State House location is identified within cemetery.
- Visitor services – None, but visitor services available within nearby college buildings and at Historic St. Mary's City.



*Trinity Episcopal Church*

##### Recommendation:

Interpretation at Trinity Episcopal Church should be closely coordinated with interpretation of St. Mary's City.

##### Recommendation:

Interpretation at Piney Point is important in making the drive down this sidetrack of the Byway worthwhile. The nineteenth century maritime stories associated with the site are not within the interpretive period of the Byway but should nonetheless be told. Byway-related interpretation of stories associated with the settlement of the Piney Point/St. George Island peninsula in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries should be developed.

## 16. St. Mary's College of Maryland, Historic St. Mary's City

Site Open: Grounds open all the time;  
Building times vary by building, open  
during school hours

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – Early female seminary, on land associated with founding of Maryland.
- The site – Various buildings in historic quadrant of campus adjacent to Historic St. Mary's City that date to 1906.
- The current visitor experience – No interpretation
- Visitor services – Rest rooms, meals in college cafeteria, small bookstore in student center for snacks.



*View approaching St. Mary's College*

### Recommendation:

Like Trinity Episcopal Church, interpretation at St. Mary's College should be closely coordinated with interpretation of St. Mary's City.

## 17. St. Ignatius Church, Villa Road, Webster Field

Site Open: Call for key to tour site

### Site Characteristics:

- The story – First chapel built in 1641, in St. Mary's City. Chapel closed in 1704, when policies of religious toleration were abolished. Present church built in 1785. One of the oldest surviving Catholic churches in Maryland.
- The site – Constructed from bricks from the dismantled colonial chapel at St. Mary's City.
- The current visitor experience – Must call for key to get inside building.
- Visitor services – None.



*St. Ignatius Church, St. Inigoes*

### Recommendation:

St. Ignatius Church is located within the vicinity of an early Catholic manor and is important to the interpretive experience of the eastern end of the Byway. Like other churches along the Byway, interpretation should focus not only upon the church and religious themes, but upon the development history of the land around it in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Manors, plantations, and wharf sites should be identified and their stories told. Themes, stories, and interpretive media need to be identified.

## 18. Point Lookout State Park

Site Open: Summer hours – Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Winter hours – Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Site characteristics:

- The story – Location of a prison camp where more than 50,000 Confederate soldiers were imprisoned during the Civil War.
- The site – Civil War Museum, Point Lookout Lighthouse, and Marshland Nature Center (currently closed due to storm damage).
- The current visitor experience – Living history programs available; recreational opportunities include camping, fishing, swimming, hunting, boating and picnicking.
- Visitor services – Orientation, rest rooms, recreational facilities, camping.



*Chesapeake Bay view at Point Lookout*

Recommendation;

Point Lookout is a state park with extensive visitor amenities, many related to recreational uses. The site is significant for a variety of reasons and is perhaps best known for its Civil War prison camp. Point Lookout is important to the Byway as its most southwestern destination at which to interpret early colonial history and enjoy a spectacular view at the mouth of the Potomac. It is a site on the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. An interpretive kiosk and exhibit should be installed at an appropriate location. Point Lookout State Park has the potential to become an Anchor Site for the Byway. Additional planning should be undertaken for the phased development of its interpretive visitor experience.

### **ADDITIONAL Secondary Sites or byway extensions suggested by Advisory Committee Members:**

#### ***Mount Aventine/Chapman Forest***

Owned by the State of Maryland, Chapman State Park at Chapman Forest includes the historic Mount Aventine plantation, which consists of 185 acres on the National Register of Historic Places and includes

the Chapman family's manor house. This site offers sweeping views of the Potomac River and is one of the most important historical, cultural and natural resources in Charles County and Southern Maryland. As such it would be an appropriate gateway site at the top of the Byway and should be included and featured in any tourism program for the region.

#### ***Marshall Hall/southern tip of Piscataway State Park***

Consider extending the Byway upward as a gateway site. Bryans Road has quite a few visitor services and amenities.

#### ***Douglas Point***

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Federal Bureau of Land Management approved a long-term land management plan for the use and protection of approximately 1900 acres. The plan includes such amenities as three beach access points, a trail system, fishing pier, motorized boat ramp, and canoe/kayak launch.

To date at Douglas Point, BLM has cleared approximately 3.5 miles of trail, constructed a wheelchair accessible interpretive trail at Chiles homesite including interpretive panels and a website (<http://www.wm.edu/wmcar/chiles/>). A quarter-mile access road to this site is under construction and is expected to be completed in the spring 2008.

Charles County Department of Public Facilities continues to work on the development of the Mallows Bay/Wilson Farm property. The first phase of the project including an access road, parking and a boat launch is expected to be complete and open to the public by 2009.

#### ***Cobb Island/Rock Point***

Cobb Island/Rock Point has an important oyster packing industry.

#### ***Opportunity for Small Museum, Nanjemoy***

A small museum in the Nanjemoy area is needed. A small museum grant should be pursued to review available materials and develop a feasibility study, budget, exhibit plan, and curatorial requirements.

#### ***St. Andrews Church***

Located in St. Mary's County and listed on the National Register of Historic Places



## ***Proposed Strategies for Linking the Various Heritage Tourism Sites***

The following strategies apply specifically to the Religious Freedom Byway and should be implemented to link the various heritage tourism sites to form a coherent travel experience, telling a story that captures the essence and national significance of the struggles for religious freedom and tolerance. Three primary strategies are proposed:

- Coordinate the interpretive presentation in a manner that best tells the story of the Byway
- Develop a wayside interpretive program
- Utilize additional interpretive media to compliment the wayside exhibits

### **Strategy 2.1: Coordinate the interpretive presentation in a manner that best tells the story of the Byway**

A set of interpretive media will be developed to present interpretation of the Byway. A series of interrelated wayside exhibits will be used as the foundation of interpretative presentation and will serve a primary means of linking byway sites. Additional interpretative media will create a variety of ways for travelers to experience the Byway and learn about the region's history. An interpretive master planning grant has already been applied for as an early action project for implementing the Byway Management Plan. (See Chapter 5.)

As a high priority, additional research, including oral history, is needed to better communicate and educate byway travelers and residents alike about early contributions of Native Americans and African-Americans to the colonial-era history of Southern Maryland, especially as it relates to the byway themes outlined starting on page 46.

### **Strategy 2.2: Develop a Wayside Interpretive Program**

The design of wayside exhibits for the Byway will be developed to complement existing interpretive exhibits in St. Mary's and Charles Counties but will include their own graphic identity to denote that they are part of the Byway. The wayside exhibit program will be implemented in phases beginning with sites that are most accessible to and currently ready for visitors. Following are the planned locations of the wayside signs. Themes and stories for the exhibits are outlined in the information for each site above where possible. In some cases, themes and stories

will be developed as part of the interpretive design process, which will include the preparation of an interpretive plan for the Byway. During the initial phase of interpretation, the following exhibits will be installed:

#### **Charles County**

- Thomas Stone National Historic Site – kiosk and wayside exhibit
- Port Tobacco Historic District – kiosk and wayside exhibit
- Smallwood Retreat House – kiosk and wayside exhibit
- Mount Carmel Monastery – wayside exhibit
- Purse State Park – wayside exhibit
- Douglas Point, Chiles Home Site – wayside exhibit
- Friendship Farm Park – wayside exhibit
- Old Durham Church – wayside exhibit
- St. Thomas Manor – wayside exhibit

#### **St. Mary's County**

- Historic St. Mary's City – kiosk/exhibit
- Sotterley Plantation – kiosk/exhibit
- St. Clement's Island – Potomac River Museum – kiosk/exhibit
- Christ Episcopal Church – wayside exhibit
- St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church – wayside exhibit
- Leonardtown – wayside exhibit
- St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church – wayside exhibit
- Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park – wayside exhibit
- St. Ignatius Church – wayside exhibit
- Point Lookout State Park – kiosk/exhibit

A second phase of interpretation will be identified for sites requiring more extensive construction, such as a formal roadside pull-off, or requiring extensive permitting. The following sites have been identified as potential locations for pull-offs requiring further investigation:

- Historical markers along Nanjemoy loop – see map, Appendix 3, Concept Plan for Purse State Park Vicinity
- Barn along Chapel Point Road with mural painted on side
- Historical markers along Popes Creek Road
- Historical marker just south of Chaptico on MD 5
- Historical marker (The Manor of Cornwaley's Cross) just south of Historic St. Mary's City on MD 5
- The view towards the Chapel at St. Mary's City

Efforts should be made to coordinate future interpretive signage with existing Maryland Historic Trust's Roadside Marker Program.

### **Strategy 2.3: Utilize additional interpretive media to complement the wayside exhibits**

The following is a summary of other interpretive media that will be used in coordination with the interpretive wayside exhibits to provide coordinated interpretation for the Byway. This interpretive media is in addition to the exhibits and programs already offered at historic sites and museums identified as attractions along the Byway. Plans for developing the interpretation are indicated as short-term and long-term.

#### ***Short-term Interpretive Media***

The following interpretive media are under consideration for development over the short-term (1 to 3 years):

##### **1) Printed Interpretive and Wayfinding Materials**

- **Byway Brochure** – As described in the marketing section of this plan, the Byway brochure will be a four-color piece that includes site descriptions, a timeline, sidebar stories on interesting people from each era, a map, pictures and other information. It will be distributed at no charge to visitors and will have the dual purpose of serving as a marketing piece and a guide to the Byway.
- **Map Pads** – This placemat-sized piece will include a map on one side and brief site descriptions on the other side.

**2) Additional Exhibits** – For areas where interior museum exhibits and guided tours are impractical but interpretation to supplement the wayside exhibits is desired, additional exhibits will be implemented. Exhibits will take two forms:

- **Traveling Exhibit** – A series of panels will give an overview of the history of the area and sites to see along the Byway. Photos and a timeline will be included. The exhibit's content will be developed with the intent to use it at various locations, particularly at festivals and special events conducted along the Byway. The construction will allow the exhibit to be dismantled and transported easily to various locations throughout the region.
- **Custom Site Exhibits** – Customized exhibits will be designed and installed at sites where additional high-quality exhibits are appropriate and desirable, such as parks and churches.

These exhibits will be customized to their specific context and may include public art, ghosting of structures, or other creative forms of exhibits. They will include information specific to the site – its history, people connected with the site, etc. Where appropriate, a recording device could also be installed to play interpretive messages, sound effects, or music.

##### **3) Byway Website on [www.southermdisfun.com](http://www.southermdisfun.com)**

- The Southern Maryland Heritage Area website is already established; therefore, rather than creating a separate website for the Byway, a section will be added to this website. The byway section will be accessible from the home page, and graphics for the link will be clearly visible to visitors to the home page. The website's byway section will present the Byway's primary theme and sub-themes. Visitors will be able to choose a time period or storyline that interests them and plan their visit accordingly. The byway will be the primary route through the region to showcase its resources and direct visitors to sites off of the Byway as spurs or side trips. The byway section will include a downloadable scenic byway brochure and map as well as suggested tour itineraries and information to help travelers plan their visit. In the future, audio-tours also may be developed and included on the website in a downloadable format. Finally, the site will include a place for travelers to write about their visit and to post pictures.

#### ***Long-term Interpretive Media***

The following interpretive media are recommended to be considered for long-term development (3 to 5 years).

**1) Byway Guidebook** – The byway guidebook will provide in-depth information on the Byway and be available for purchase as a guide to the region and to keep as a souvenir of the trip.

**2) Audio Interpretation** – Creating audio interpretive media will offer the opportunity to bring to life the voices, music and other sounds of the historical eras being interpreted on the Byway. Options under consideration include:

- **Talking Houses** – ([www.talkinghouse.com](http://www.talkinghouse.com)) Actradio Talking Houses were first used by realtors to promote home sales. Several tourism

bureaus have discovered that these devices can be useful in enhancing driving tours in their communities. Talking House will be installed at appropriate locations such as non-profit sites not regularly open to the public and churches to provide enhanced self-guided interpretation.

- **Audio-tours** - Downloadable iPod or MP3 tours will personalize the story of the Byway through the voices of people who lived during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, using diaries, letters, newspaper accounts, and other archival resources as the foundation of the tour scripts. This approach offers a variety of ways to access the tours, including letting travelers download from the website onto iPods or MP3 players parts of various tours to create their own tour. Tours also can be printed for those who do not have this equipment.
- **Audio/Video Tours** – Tours could be further enhanced with images through the use of a PDA (personal digital assistant or personal computer), MP3 or iPod that supports the addition of images such as maps, current photographs and historic photographs. Such photos can be particularly beneficial to show the interiors of buildings that may not be open to the public.

#### **4) Tour Guides** – Several types of guides will be considered

- **Interpreters** – Guides who give tours of a specific site may be in period costume, uniform or “street” clothes.
- **Step-on Guide** – These guides accompany a group tour for some or all of their visit, providing narration between sites about the history of an area or providing information about what visitors will see at the next site
- **Living History Interpreters** – Interpreters dress in period costume and take on the character of a historical figure, in effect becoming a person from another era.

#### **5) Programs and Special Events** – Periodic special events or programs include

- **Cemetery tours** – Most of the churches along the Byway route have adjacent cemeteries. A living history tour at one or more of these cemeteries would tell the stories of some of the historical characters buried in these cemeteries.

- **Open house** – A weekend (or week) would be selected for all of the sites along the Byway to be open including churches that are usually locked and even private homes that are never open to the public.
- **Re-enactments** – Events and activities that occurred during the historic eras being interpreted may be re-enacted at specific times during the year.

### ***Goal 3: Establish the Byway as a primary touring route in the Southern Maryland Heritage Area and as a destination unto itself to educate visitors about the early history of the region, its effect on the nation's founding and the struggles for religious freedom and tolerance***

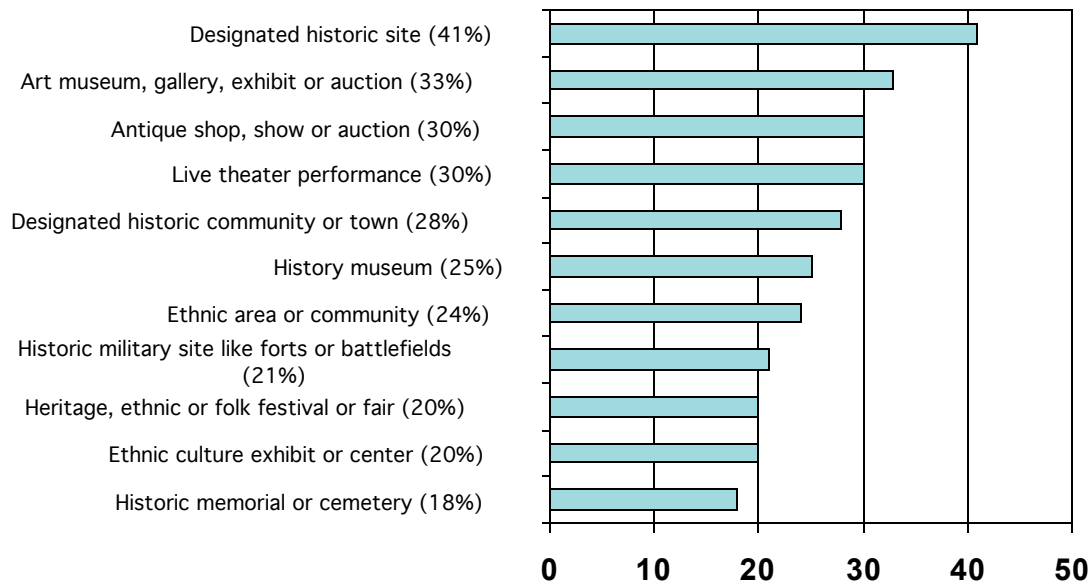
Discussion at Advisory Committee and public meetings highlighted local interest and enthusiasm for sharing the Byway's story with tourists and making the travel experience memorable and educational. Participants in these meetings agreed that the key to success is creating a strong historical narrative that links sites along the Byway. Local stakeholders also noted the importance of creating mechanisms such as a website to attract tourists and tell them what can be experienced on the Byway.

This section details current trends in cultural heritage travel that byway organizers will consider when developing tourism marketing and visitor management strategies. Additionally, the section looks at current travel to and marketing for Southern Maryland. Finally, the section includes strategies that local organizers will develop to position the Byway for heritage tourism. All of the recommended marketing strategies are considered short-term (1-3 years) with the goal of creating a presence for the Byway among the traveling public as quickly as possible.

#### **Trends in Cultural Heritage Travel**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines cultural heritage tourism as “*traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.*”





*Top heritage traveler destinations*  
Source: Travel Industry Association of America

Cultural heritage tourism has seen tremendous growth in the past two decades and now is recognized as a major travel industry segment. According to the *2003 Historic/Cultural Traveler* study by the Travel Industry Association (TIA) and Smithsonian magazine, 81 percent of U.S. adults who traveled in 2002 were considered cultural heritage travelers. These travelers included historical or cultural activities on almost 217 million person-trips, up 13 percent from 192 million in 1996.

Recent research indicates that cultural heritage travelers stay longer and spend more than other kinds of travelers. According to the Travel Industry Association, cultural heritage travelers

- **Stay longer** than other types of travelers—5.2 nights compared to 3.4 nights
- **Spend more** than other types of travelers—\$623 per trip compared to \$457
- **Shop more** than other travelers—44 percent compared to 33 percent

A TIA study of travelers who shop indicates that they are looking for stores they do not have at home (73 percent), items they cannot get at home (67 percent), items that represent the destination they are visiting (53 percent) and a unique shopping atmosphere (52 percent).

Cultural heritage travelers take frequent trips, with 25 percent taking three or more trips a year. With a growing interest in more frequent, shorter vacations to destinations closer to home, successful destinations must offer a variety of changing experiences to attract repeat visitation. Travelers to historic and cultural sites are also, in general,

slightly older than other travelers and more likely to have a college degree (six in ten). Four in ten are from baby boomer households. Boomers make 241 million household trips each year, and 14 percent pay \$1,000+ for a vacation. Like all cultural heritage travelers, boomers are more likely to stay in a hotel or motel.

### Participation in historic and/or cultural activities among U.S. Travelers

Fifty-five percent of cultural heritage travelers plan their trips a month or less before traveling, making the Internet an essential marketing tool. At the same time, an increasing number of decisions are left until after visitors arrive. Thus, it is still important to have detailed visitors information such as maps easily accessible for visitor after they have arrived at their destination.

### Decisions visitors make after arrival include:

- Restaurants (48%)
- Shopping areas (45%)
- Museum/exhibit (26%)
- Sightseeing tour (24%)
- Movie (16%)
- Theme Park (15%)
- Religious Service (14%)
- Live theater or performance (14%)
- Festival or parade (13%)
- Other activities or attractions (24%)

Cultural heritage travelers are most likely to travel by car (68 percent). They are twice as likely as other U.S. travelers to take a group tour (7 percent vs. 3 percent), although the market for group tours is still

a relatively small part of travel overall. The group tour industry has found that to capture today's traveler, it is increasingly important to offer value-added tours that provide exclusive opportunities for behind-the-scenes tours or other benefits that travelers would not be able to get on their own.

Cultural heritage travelers are more likely to take part in many different kinds of activities when they are traveling. 17 percent participate in four or more activities as compared to 5 percent of all travelers, with nature based attractions such as state or national parks being a strong draw.

### ***Travel to Maryland and Southern Maryland***

The Maryland Office of Tourism defines the state's consumer (leisure) target audience as adults ages 35-64 with a household income of \$60K+, well educated and working in managerial and professional occupations. They have made a trip of more than one day's duration within the United States in the past 12 months which includes business, vacation, weekend travel and short trips.

The primary market is within a 400-mile radius: Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, Delaware, West Virginia and part of New York, Ohio, Indiana and North Carolina. (Of these markets, the Office of Tourism is currently focusing on a 200-mile radius due to rising gasoline prices and the trend of traveling shorter distances.) A secondary market is identified as Maryland residents traveling within their home state. Additional markets are reached through the travel trade: group travel leaders, meeting planners, association managers, travel agents and sporting event managers.

The target audience also has an interest in Maryland's special offerings such as the Civil War, Historic National Road, Star-Spangled Banner, sporting events and multicultural sites and events.

Tourism directors in St. Mary's and Charles counties identify a primary drive market audience similar to the statewide market – Washington D.C., Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Maryland. The Southern Maryland region draws a lot of day trippers and weekend travelers. While St. Mary's County identifies an audience similar to the statewide profile – Baby Boomers and seniors interested in maritime and colonial history – Charles County notes that while attracting a similar audience, they also have

significant visitation from men, ages 25-35, who come to the area to fish.

### ***Tourism Marketing in Southern Maryland***

For the past 14 years, Southern Maryland has been marketed as a region with each county contributing funding for various activities ranging from producing brochures to attending travel trade marketplaces for the group tour industry.

With state designation as a heritage area, the partners worked through the Southern Maryland Heritage Area (SMHA) to develop a brand, "Where Time and Tide Meet" and logo for use on marketing materials. In April 2003, the SMHA produced a "Five-Year Schedule of Tourism Marketing Projects and Marketing Outreach Programs." The plan included action steps to reach both the resident market and the non-resident (tourist) market.

SMHA maintains a website, [www.southernmdisfun.com](http://www.southernmdisfun.com), which includes suggested itineraries for day trips and a three-day trip through the region (including Charles, St. Mary's and Calvert Counties). Visitors can also order special interest guides and a map from the website. In addition, the site has links to each county's tourism website.

A key piece to introducing visitors to the region's heritage is the *Southern Maryland Heritage Driving Tours* brochure. This 12-panel, four-color piece includes information for three thematic tours – Religious Heritage, Agricultural and Maritime Heritage, and Wars & Conflicts. Each tour has listings of sites related to the theme along with hours/days of operation and contact information. A large map marks sites on each route along with other information such as the location of visitor information centers.

The Charles County Office of Tourism and St. Mary's County Division of Tourism each maintain websites ([www.visitcharlescounty.com](http://www.visitcharlescounty.com) and [www.stmarysmd.com](http://www.stmarysmd.com)) which provide extensive information on attractions, accommodations, events, etc. Additionally, visitors can download or order from a selection of brochures on each site, including brochures on each county's churches.

The Maryland Office of Tourism recently produced a new publication, *Maryland Byways: Explore the Roads Less Traveled*. The 176-page, four color

guidebook includes 19 thematic byway tours. The Religious Freedom Tour in Southern Maryland includes a descriptive narrative of a 189-mile route that begins at Port Tobacco and concludes at Point Lookout. Maps outline the roads and stops along the route. Addresses, phone numbers and websites are given for sites along the route.

Southern Maryland is also featured in *Destination Maryland: The Official Guide to Maryland State Travel*, published annually by the Maryland Office of Tourism. In addition to advertisements and site listings, the section includes brief text on settlement, Civil War history, recreational opportunities and other features of the area.

The tourism partners worked together in April 2007 to host a “Historic Church and Religious Sites Familiarization Tour” for travel writers. Two writers participated in the two-day tour which included stops in each county.

### **Heritage Tourism Marketing: Positioning the Byway for Tourism**

The Byway will be an appealing destination for visitors who will come to learn about the area’s history and enjoy the scenery, recreation and other activities. Reaching the target audience is an ongoing effort that builds on the successful marketing partnerships of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area and St. Mary’s and Charles County offices of tourism.

The following are strategies for promoting the Byway. In some cases the action steps can be incorporated into established marketing activities while in other instances new action steps are planned to increase the opportunities to reach the desired audiences.

### ***Proposed Strategies for Establishing the Byway as a Primary Touring Route in the Southern Maryland Heritage Area and as a Destination unto Itself***

The following strategies apply specifically to the Religious Freedom Byway and should be implemented to establish the Byway as a primary touring route in the Southern Maryland Heritage Area and as a destination unto itself to educate visitors about the early history of the region, its effect on the nation’s founding and the struggles for religious

freedom and tolerance. Six strategies are proposed:

- Produce collateral materials
- Create a Byway website presence
- Develop communications resources and activities
- Promote the Byway to group tours
- Develop cross promotions
- Develop/enhance visitor facilities

### **Strategy 3.1: Produce Collateral Materials**

#### **1) Develop byway driving tour brochures**

**1.1 Adapt the existing brochure.** The *Southern Maryland Heritage Driving Tours* brochure already includes a religious freedom route with an introductory paragraph and listings for 15 sites. This route needs to be replaced or augmented with the Religious Freedom Byway travel route and with the non-byway related sites incorporated as side trips or spurs off the Byway.

**1.2 Develop a byway-specific brochure.** A new byway brochure will serve as a comprehensive resource for byway travelers and will include

- An introduction that will provide an overview of Southern Maryland’s history in the defined time period; summarize major historical themes; and explain the role of religion in the state’s history.
- A listings for each site that contains a brief description, address, phone number, website, hours/days/months of operation, site open or locked (churches), type of tour (guided or self-guided), and coordinates for locating the site on the map. Historic and/or current pictures of each site will also be included.
- A map that will mark each site on the route. Visitor services – public rest rooms, lodging, information centers, gas stations, etc. – will also be identified.
- Sidebars that will highlight stories such as the people who lived here during the defined time period, changing styles of cemetery headstones, religious beliefs of various groups, how the manor system evolved, etc.
- A timeline that will trace important milestones in Southern Maryland’s settlement and development during the time period.
- A listing of events that relate to the Byway’s sites – special annual tours, festivals, performances, etc.

#### **2) Produce byway tear-off map pads**

Tear-off map pads are a cost effective way to promote the Byway and encourage visitors to





*Southern Maryland Heritage Area home page*

explore the region. Map pads will use the same map that is developed for the Byway brochure. Brief listings of the sites and locations of information centers will be included. Map pads will be widely distributed through information centers, hotels, attractions and other locations.

### Strategy 3.2: Create a byway website presence

#### 1) Create byway link on [www.southernmdisfun.com](http://www.southernmdisfun.com)

The Southern Maryland Heritage Area website is already established, therefore, rather than create a separate website for the Byway, a section will be added to this website. The section will be accessible from the home page. Graphics for the link will be clearly visible to visitors to the home page. The website's byway section will reflect the Byway's main theme and sub-themes. Visitors will be able to choose a time period or storyline that interests them and plan their visit accordingly. The byway will be the primary route through the region to showcase its resources and direct visitors to sites off of the Byway as spurs or side trips. The byway section will include a downloadable scenic byway brochure and map as well as suggested tour itineraries and information to help travelers plan their visit. In the future, audio tours also may be developed and can be included in a downloadable format on the website. Finally, the site will also include a place for travelers to write about their visit and post pictures.

#### 2) Develop suggested itineraries

Because the Byway is lengthy, tourists may not have time to travel the entire length in one visit. Offering itineraries for shorter distances may encourage more travel along the Byway, particularly by day trippers or weekend visitors.

Itineraries will include routes that take one-half day, one day, two days or three days. Each itinerary will include travel times between sites to allow visitors to adequately plan their trip.

### Strategy 3.3: Develop communications resources and activities

#### 1) Develop a byway press kit

A press kit is needed for the Byway to be available on the website as well as in hard copy to mail to the media upon request. The press kit will include an overview of the Byway and its attractions, fact sheet, brochure and contact information for media assistance. In addition, press releases will be developed for specific activities (events, grand openings, etc.) along the Byway, and the press kit will accompany these releases when contacting travel media.

#### 2) Host a media familiarization tour to announce the Byway

A two- to three-day familiarization (fam) tour is needed to showcase the Byway to travel writers. The tour will include a knowledgeable guide to accompany the writers; however, the tour will be designed to allow the media to experience the Byway as a visitor would. As articles are written, permission will be requested to post favorable stories on the website to further promote the Byway.

#### 3) Develop radio trade-out promotions

Tourism partners need to create give-away packages including lodging, attraction admissions and meals in local restaurants. Radio stations in target markets will be asked to give away these packages and to enhance the promotion by interviews with attraction representatives and by scheduling on-site broadcasts in Southern Maryland.

### Strategy 3.4: Promote the Byway to group tours

#### 1) Map the route for motorcoach

A receptive tour operator needs to be recruited to travel the Byway and give advice on the best route for buses and to point out stops where buses may have difficulty parking or turning around. An alternative plan will be developed to accommodate any identified difficulties.



Group tour organizing to enter St. Ignatius Church (left) and getting ready for a group photo (right)

- 2) **Create a promotional piece.** A promotional piece needs to be created to target the interests of tour operators and group leaders. The piece will highlight special extras such as behind-the-scenes tours, living history presentations, musical performances, etc. – to enhance the sales potential of the tour to groups.

### 3) **Promote the Byway through travel trade shows**

The Byway needs to be promoted through travel trade shows already attended by the region's tourism directors (American Bus Association, Pennsylvania Bus Association and Going on Faith). A database of interested tour operators will be maintained and bookings will be tracked annually.

### 4) **Promote the Byway through *Going on Faith***

The bi-monthly publication is produced through Group Travel Leader publications and is targeted to church and religious travel planners. A trade conference and marketplace is also offered to promote destinations directly to tour buyers. ([www.goingonfaith.com](http://www.goingonfaith.com))

## Strategy 3.5: Develop cross promotions

### 1) **Host a frontline hospitality event**

As a hospitality training activity, an event for frontline tourism staff in both counties will be hosted annually. The event will include music, local food and give-aways. Information stations will offer brochures and displays on the Byway and attractions throughout the region.

### 2) **Create Byway Cards**

Free admission passes will be available for frontline employees for those attractions that charge admission or for special events.

### 3) **Make information notebooks**

Notebooks will be created with sections on attractions, restaurants, lodging and shopping in the region. Information will include descriptions, contact information and directions. The notebooks will be given to visitor centers and tourism attractions.

## Strategy 3.6: Develop/enhance visitor information facilities

Develop a new visitor center or kiosk in the vicinity of Indian Head to serve the Washington, DC travelers heading towards the Byway and expand or relocate the existing visitor center in La Plata.

## **Goal 4: Utilize Context Sensitive Solutions to design byway projects and work cooperatively with all federal, state and local agencies to make it easier and safer to follow the Byway in a manner that respects its cultural and natural resources.**

The following describes the recommended strategies for balancing safety and beauty along the Byway. The approach is based on Maryland State Highway Administrations overall effort to incorporate Context Sensitive Solutions into their everyday design practice. The approach is detailed in the document Maryland SHA's [CSS for Byways Booklet](#). The following is a synopsis of the approach.

## **Approach to conducting work on the Religious Freedom Byway**

Although byway designation does not carry with it any type of regulatory requirements, as is the

case for historic sites or districts, there is usually a high degree of interest in maintaining the existing character and intrinsic qualities – whether it be a tree-lined road, a rolling route through farmland, or a historic “main street” community. The following approach is one that allows for the important scenic, historic, natural, recreational, cultural or archaeological qualities to be considered early in the process and for those qualities to help shape the solution to any roadway related issue.

1. Understand the Overall Significance of the Roadway as a Scenic Byway

SHA staff, in whatever capacity they may become involved with the Byway, need to become familiar with the reasons for which the Byway has been designated by SHA and is being considered for designation by the Federal Highway Administration. SHA staff are involved in decision-making related to the major project milestones in project planning, design and development. This occurs through asset management, land development permitting decisions and other capacities in which decisions may affect the physical and visual qualities of the Byway. SHA staff should be familiar with the Vision and Goals of the Byway and consider what impact SHA decisions along this byway may have in achieving the Byway’s Vision and Goals. SHA has established internal review mechanisms that flag roads planned for new projects located on scenic byways. SHA staff, located in diverse functional areas and multiple offices, however, must use this routine as a means of learning that this route is a designated byway and to access information about the Byway’s Vision and Goals and characteristics.

2. Understand the Positive Quality of a Traveler’s Experience along the Byway

Is the traveling experience one that conveys the character of a small town? Is the experience one that is characterized by open spaces and broad views? Is the experience one of traveling through an overhanging canopy of trees? Is the experience one of traversing a two-lane route with relatively narrow shoulders and closely spaced trees or of traversing a four lane road with wide landscaped median?

3. Understand the Character-Defining Features of the Project Area

What are the elements of the road and roadside

design that establish the character of the road and the traveler’s experience in the specific project area? Roadway design elements include both its alignment and the associated structures used in the construction of the road. Such elements might include paved or turf shoulders, sidewalks, hiker/biker trails, landscaped medians, traffic signage, lane and edge pavement, striping and utilities. Such character-defining elements could include the relationship of the alignment to scenic views of dramatic natural features or of pastoral farm scenes or a bridge design that provides water or wetland views from passenger vehicles.

4. Determine What Treatments are Appropriate Given the Character-Defining Features

Once SHA staff and their partners have familiarized themselves with the Byway’s Vision and Goals and then identified the character-defining features in the project area, they will be able to maintain this character through their work, whatever its nature. Maintenance of the character-defining features applies to planning and design phases of a project, to project construction, to the issuance of access permits and to traditional maintenance activities along a Byway – to all actions that affect the context of the Byway.

Where a proposed action does not affect an identified character-defining feature, consideration should be given as to how the action undertaken can support the road’s special character. Stated another way, can the project be done in a manner that enhances the visual and physical quality of the Byway? For example, although the physical character and appearance of the Byway in the area approaching Leonardtown has changed greatly from the historic appearance of the road in this area, actions could be taken to support the resources that do remain from the historic period and to make this section of the road less out of character with historic sections of the road.

Additionally, where character-defining features of the Byway have been lost, it may be possible to design and fund roadside enhancement projects to add value to the traveler’s experience.



### *Existing Policy Language Facilitating Flexibility in Highway Design*

Extensive efforts have been made to better understand the inherent flexibility provided in AASHTO's Green Book and other types of design guidance documents. Here is a synopsis of some of the language that facilitates greater flexibility in highway design.

"Design speed is a selected speed used to determine the various geometric features of the roadway. The assumed design speed should be a logical one with respect to the topography, anticipated operating speed, the adjacent land use, and the functional classification of the highway." - AASHTO Green Book



"The intent of this policy is to provide guidance to the designer by referencing a recommended range of values for critical dimensions. It is not intended to be a detailed design manual that could supersede the need for the application of sound principles by the knowledgeable design professional. Sufficient flexibility is permitted to encourage independent designs tailored to particular situations. Minimum values are either given or implied by the lower value in a given range of values. The larger values within the ranges will normally be used where the social, economic, and environmental (S.E.E.) impacts are not critical"

--Foreward, AASHTO Green Book

"The designer must keep in mind site-specific conditions, design speeds, rural versus urban locations, and practicality. The distances obtained from Figure 3-1 should suggest only the approximate center of a range to be considered and not a precise distance to be held as absolute." - AASHTO Roadside Design Guide

### *Significance of the Byway*

Pages 19 to 32 of this Byway Management Plan describe the significance of the Byway. SHA staff performing work along the Byway should familiarize themselves with the significance statements that reflect the important qualities of the Byway that should be maintained.

### *Quality of Traveler Experience*

Page 33 to 44 describe the efforts being made toward preserving the qualities associated with the Byway. SHA staff performing work along the Byway should understand how their project might alter the traveler experience and be cognizant of that experience as they make proposals for new construction, rehabilitation, or maintenance work.

### *Character Defining Features of the Project Area*

Chapter 2 describes the character defining features of the project area. SHA and county staff performing work along the Byway should familiarize themselves with these character defining features and utilize them to devise potential solutions for a particular project that are sensitive to those features.

### *Appropriate Treatments*

For the most part, new work along the Religious Freedom Byway should try to maintain the character defining features. Given the nature of this particular travel route, few of the remaining roadway features are of historic significance. Most, however, contribute in a positive way to the overall rural character of the area, especially the roads that comprise the Nanjemoy loop, and the portion of Route 5 south of Leonardtown. Other places, such as the approach to Leonardtown, or US 301 in La Plata, could benefit from some enhancement as part of future reconstruction, rehabilitation or resurfacing projects.

## ***Proposed Strategies for Utilizing Context Sensitive Solutions***

The following strategies have been identified to help SHA and county staff either preserve, maintain or enhance the character defining features of the Byway while performing work on the routes that comprise the Byway. Four primary strategies are proposed:

- Design the entire roadway experience including both roadway and land use elements to fit the particular context

	Town<<<<<<<<<	<<<<Transition<<<<	<<<<<<Rural
Desired Operating Speed	25 mph	35 mph	varies 35-50 mph
Lighting	Street lamps	Cobra lights	No lights
Shoulder	On-street parking w/ bumpouts	Curb and gutter (no street parking)	Grass shoulder, open drainage
Adjacent Uses/ Setback	Buildings up to sidewalk	Buildings w/ space between	Buildings far back
Adjacent Landscape	Regularly space street trees	Trees less regularly spaced	Farm, Forest and Wetlands

- Use a consistent set of roadside details to achieve overall desired character of the Byway
- Provide pull-offs or clearly identified places to park associated with byway features
- Accommodate the multi-modal needs of the Byway

### Management Strategies

Based on a review of the types of projects that are likely to be implemented and the types of concerns that arise from a review of traffic volume and crash statistics, it appears that the majority of changes likely to occur can be addressed by the utilizing the CSS approach and the strategies that follow.

#### Strategy 4.1: Design the entire roadway experience including both roadway and land use elements to fit the particular context

Along the Byway, the character defining features of the roadway incorporate both rural and urban features. Typical road sections should reinforce the desired land use and vice versa. As the Byway transitions between rural and urban (or village), so too should the typical road section.

- Rural areas - keep two-lane sections as they are; encourage conservation and land use measures that will support this road configuration
- Transition areas – in developing areas, keep two-lane sections as they are and accommodate new development with new network, rather than expanding the road
- Four-lane existing sections – maintain and enhance these to support character defining features of the Byway

If, in the future, growth and development in the county create the need for expanding the capacity

of existing minor arterials from two or four lanes, the County should work with the Maryland State Highway Administration to identify context sensitive solutions or the possibility of increasing roadway capacity in a manner that maintains the character defining features of the roadway, while at the same time addressing any safety and capacity needs along the Byway.

The best examples of existing design elements that are found in rural, village and urban areas along the Byway should be identified and then used as a way of determining how new projects might fit that particular context.

Based on the inventory of existing elements, a kit of parts can be developed that illustrates how new elements could be proportioned to fit the context (lane width, shoulders, medians, barriers, vegetation lights, signs, sidewalks, and adjacent land uses) leading to a desired character by area. These new elements can then be organized and portrayed graphically according to the table (above).

The following strategies should be considered for use along scenic byways:

#### ... In rural areas

- Establish a consistent set of roadside details and treatments that have a parkway-like character including the use of steel-backed wood guardrails or rusting steel W-beam, painting the back of sign posts brown, maintaining grass or reinforce turf shoulders, and encouraging private owners to use landscape treatments that are consistent with the rural character of the area (for screening, fencing, entrances, etc.)
- Maintain a sense of enclosure by introducing or maintaining roadside trees where vistas are not present

- Where vistas are present use landscape design to enhance and frame views. In some locations provide places to pull off the road to minimize conflicts between byway travelers and through travelers. These locations have been identified in the enhancements section of the plan.
- Where existing obstacles are present in clear areas, increase the visibility or awareness of the obstacle, but do not remove it
- Where operating speeds exceed the design speed along horizontal or vertical curves, increase the visibility of the curve and driver awareness, but do not remove the curve
- Where left turns into driveways or side roads result in use of the shoulder area for bypassing stopped vehicles, reinforce the shoulder with either a 50-50 topsoil aggregate mix or other structural reinforcement (e.g. grid)
- Maintain all intersections at grade
- Where new alignment is constructed, the roadway should match the contour of the landscape; in other words, the road should “lie lightly on the land”

... In urban or village areas, incorporate roadside design elements that reflect the urban or village character into the typical section.

- Provide for a transition from open rural highway to village street
- Use self-enforcing design measures to reduce operating speeds approaching settled areas such as narrowing the look and feel of the road, and gradually introducing urban section details when approaching the village or city entrance
- Develop entry features that clearly signal that you are entering a settled place
- Provide on-street parking, sidewalks, and street trees in a consistent pattern
- Encourage land use that reinforces the urban or village feel utilizing “build-to lines” rather than “set back” lines to achieve a building façade whose height is proportional to the width of the

- street and serves to visually enclose the view, further narrowing the field of vision
- Pedestrians should have the right-of-way when crossing the street at designated crosswalks in the village or urban sections
- Lighting should be pedestrian scaled
- Encourage the use of signs that are in keeping with the adjacent architecture in color, lighting, scale and materials.
- Provide for on-street bicycle lanes where feasible (versus on-road usage in rural areas)

**Strategy 4.2: Use a consistent set of roadside details to achieve an overall desired character of the Byway consistent with its designation as a historic or scenic route**

See the [CSS guidelines booklet](#) for additional info and consider the following key points:

- **Traffic Control and Signs** – Poles and structures as well as the backs of signs should be brown or black to minimize contrast.
- **Grading and Drainage** – Use natural textures and tints to reduce contrast associated with roadside drainage features (e.g. field stone in lieu of rip rap, exposed aggregate concrete to remove the bright-white on new concrete structures).



*On the George Washington Memorial Parkway, support structures and poles are finished with a brown color to reduce contrast. When all supports and sign backs are treated this way, the roadway character is transformed.*



*Along Route 50, in Upperville, Virginia, natural field stone was used in lieu of rip-rap and all concrete used for drainage structures incorporated an exposed aggregate finish in order to minimize the contrast with the adjoining stone wall (reconstructed with the same stone as on-site).*



- **Utilities** – Adjust the locations of overhead wires to minimize their potential impact on mature trees.



*The simplest method of preserving big trees along roadsides from the pruning requirements of utility lines is to shift the line to the opposing side of the road. This requires some coordination and communication with the utility company in advance of new construction requiring adjustments to utilities.*

- **Landscaping** – Use species appropriate to the context such as natives in rural woodlands or old farm roads and old-fashioned plants in historic districts.



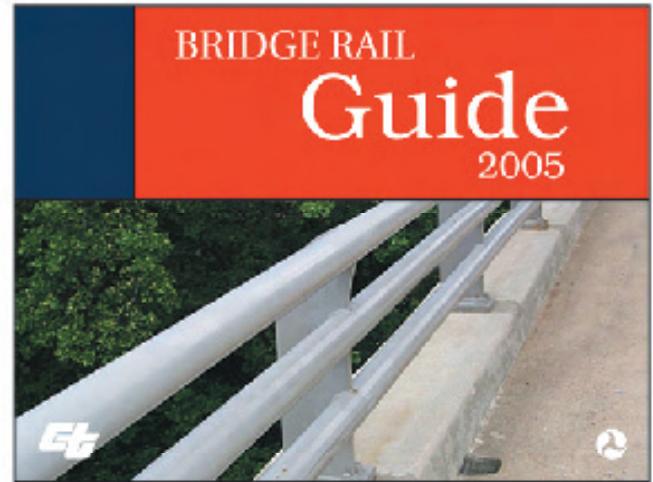
*Mt. Victoria along the Cobb Island Branch*



*Reconstructed State House at St. Mary's City*

- **Bridges** – Use appropriate detailing to maintain distinct visual identity on parapet walls and abutments. Bridge widths should be consistent with roadway widths. FHWA has an outstanding website that illustrates the types of available bridge rails, along with the crash test level that has been approved for that rail.

The bridge along MD 234 over St. Clements Creek is a good example of a structure that could benefit from this Bridge Rail Guide. (See page 16.)



SHA bridge designers have agreed to use a rail similar to the one shown below with a brown color applied to maintain an open look to the creek and wetland below. (The safety fence would not be required.)



*Oregon 2-tube side rail curb mount will be utilized on bridges along the Byway to maintain the open look. A brown color will be utilized (Photo courtesy of FHWA)*

- **Lighting** – Minimize night sky pollution by using fixtures with concealed light sources.



*Full cut-off Cobrahead light fixture*

- **Access Management** – Consider adopting policies through the development review process that: 1) encourage the linking together of parcels and the construction of parallel system of streets and alleys to distribute local traffic rather than channeling it all to the main road; and, 2) minimize the need for accel and decel lanes by reducing operating speeds through rapidly developing areas. (See case study that follows regarding Leonardtown.)
- **Maintenance** – Identify likely maintenance requirements early in the project design process and select details that match the likely long-term maintenance commitments for the project
- **Community Entrances** – Use materials and design details that are consistent with the communities' dominant architectural styles and/or historical development.
- **Historic Crossroads and Intersections** – Carefully integrate traffic control measures and intersections to maintain the historic integrity of intersections including the use of roundabouts, mast arms/signals, utility boxes, crosswalks, drainage structures, and other common design elements found at intersections.
- **Bicycling** – Use tinted asphalt on shoulders needed for bicycle use to differentiate between vehicle travel lanes and bicycle lanes as a way to minimize the impact of wider pavement cross sections on driver perception and operating speeds.

- **Signs and Wayfinding** – Use a combination of printed media, web and satellite based media to minimize the number of signs needed to follow the Byway and find attractions and sites along the Byway.

#### **Strategy 4.3: Provide pull-offs or clearly defined places to park that are associated with Byway features and attractions**

Where features or attractions are visible from the Byway route there should be a clearly identified place to pull-off out of the travel way (either a designed pull-off or a wide reinforced turf shoulder) with adequate sight distance so that slow moving vehicles are not conflicting with higher speed through travel.

Pull-offs are needed primarily along the Nanjemoy Loop in the vicinity of Purse State Park and other state lands. See the illustrative concepts in Appendix 3, Concept Plans, showing the locations of proposed pull-offs and design suggestions for how to ensure that the pull-offs fit the rural character of that portion of the Byway.

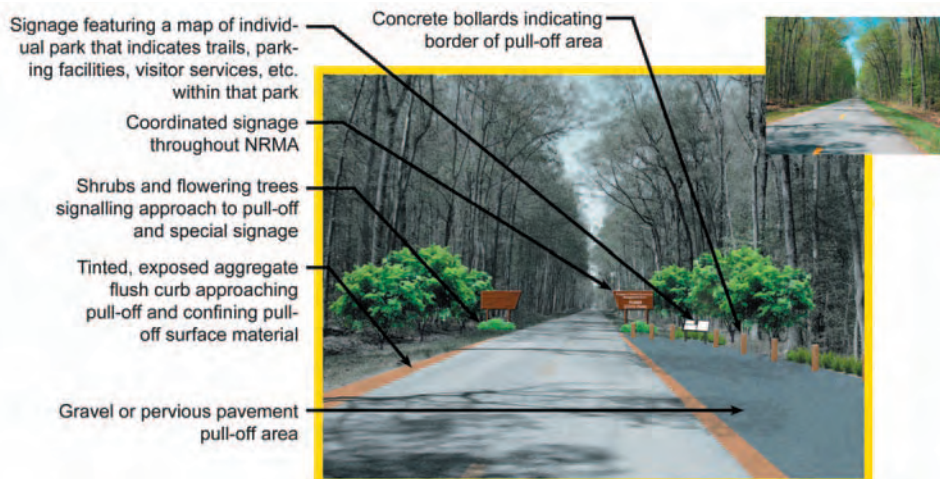
Pull-offs with visitor information kiosks should be considered for three of the key gateway areas to the Byway:

- La Plata (US 301 Gateway)
- Indian Head (MD 210, Indian Head Highway)
- Leonardtown – where Route 4 intersects with Route 5 (vicinity)

#### **Strategy 4.4: Accommodate the multi-modal needs of the Byway**

##### **Greenways and Trail Linkages**

In Charles County there are several planned regional trails and greenways that can provide additional opportunities for visitors to sample the heritage and nature found along the Byway. Efforts should be made to establish trailheads for trails that cross the byway route and recognize ecological greenways in the design of any byway improvements for greenways that cross the Byway. (See Bridge design guidelines on page 73.)





The following descriptions are adapted from Maryland DNR's Greenway Atlas. The locations of these existing and planned greenways are shown on page 10:

*Indian Head to White Plains Rail Trail*

The Indian Head to White Plains Rail Trail is a current project along a rail corridor currently owned by the U. S. Naval Ordnance Station at Indian Head. Discussions about the potential trail were held with the Navy and public officials. Previously, the tracks were used only for a dinner train, but the Navy wished to maintain the option of utilizing the tracks for future rail needs; a rail-with-trail was an option. The rail corridor begins in White Plains and runs due west, approximately 12.5 miles to the town of Indian Head. It connects to DNR's Mattawoman Natural Environment Area. According to the Charles County Department of Public Facilities, Parks and Grounds, construction on the trail is on schedule and is expected to be completed by approximately December 31, 2009.

*Mattawoman Creek (Ecological Greenway)*

Mattawoman Creek is a proposed stream valley greenway. DNR currently owns three parcels (Cedarville State Forest, Mattawoman Natural Environment Area, and Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area) totaling over 4,500 acres which border Mattawoman Creek. This figure includes 1,600 acres of land recently designated as state wildlands. In addition, 1,300 acres of Chapman State Park is part of this greenway. The greenway would link these properties, providing natural resource and water quality protection.

*Popes Creek Railroad (Recreational Greenway)*

The Popes Creek Railroad is a potential 2.3-mile rail trail in the southwest portion of the county that would run adjacent to Popes Creek from the Potomac River to Rt. 301. A natural heritage area is located at the mouth of the creek.

*Potomac River Greenways (Ecological Greenway)*

The Potomac River Greenways is a partially established, multi-jurisdictional and interstate greenway. Charles County contains a number of public park holdings that contribute to this multi-state greenway project. Piscataway National Park, Purse State Park, General Smallwood State Park, and Ruth B. Swan County Park are all situated directly on the Potomac River. Chapel Point State Park and the county's Friendship Landing property

lie in tidal tributaries. In addition, the federal government owns significant acreage at the U.S. Naval Ordnance Station in Indian Head.

The vast majority of land along the Charles County portion of the Potomac River is privately owned. In 1998, the state obtained the 2,225-acre Chapman's Landing property. This site is located 20 miles south of Washington, D.C. and has approximately 2.25 miles of undisturbed Potomac shoreline and more than 1,200 acres of forest. The tract also contains two streams which flow into Mattawoman Creek. Several public and private sector partners are developing strategies to protect a large portion of the county's western peninsula, including the historically significant Mallows Bay.

*Zekiah Swamp (Ecological Greenway)*

Zekiah Swamp is a natural greenway running the length of Charles County. Zekiah Swamp has been recognized by numerous authorities as one of the most significant ecological areas in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Zekiah Swamp is part of the Wicomico River, which is one of the nine state-designated scenic rivers. Zekiah Swamp Run is a 21-mile braided stream which connects two state properties. Cedarville State Forest, situated along the Charles County-Prince George's County border, contains the headwater region of Zekiah Swamp. The Zekiah Swamp Natural Environment Area in southern Charles County is located at the stream's confluence with the Wicomico River. Private landholdings between these two parcels, while not available for public access, are largely undeveloped.

*Potomac Heritage Trail*

Southern Maryland RC&D Board, Inc. and the National Park Service are partnering to extend the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail into Southern Maryland's Charles and St. Mary's Counties. The PHNST is a dynamic interpretive trail experience that will bring unique and sustainable economic development opportunities, such as heritage and place-based tourism, to Southern Maryland's trail-adjacent communities. The PHNST will be a biking/driving route on existing roads, linking public spaces, parks and heritage sites. The trail projects to create a hiking look with the White Plains to Indian Head rails-to-trails project (See page 75.) and the Three-Notch Trail. Signage coordination is discussed separately, starting on page 78.



### ***Bicycling Guide to the Byway***

The Oxen Hill Bicycle Club has published a bicycle map covering the area and frequently sponsors rides along portions of the Byway route. A pocket bicycling guide for the Byway should be produced, published and widely distributed.

### ***Point Lookout State Park Bicycle Access***

Work towards implementing the improvements for Point Lookout Road from the Ranger Station to south of Camp Brown Road as a means to provide better and safer bicycle access to Point Lookout State Park is a priority for the Byway. (See page 15 for description.) The narrow shoulders combined with the heavy use of the route by wide vehicles and trailers make it difficult for bicycle access to the park.

### ***Water access to the Byway***

Water access is a significant part of the overall byway experience. Water landings are readily available at some of the sites along the Byway. A waterproof water access map should be produced, published and widely distributed.

## ***Goal 5: Make it easier to find and follow the Byway***

In order for a byway to be designated a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road through the Federal Highway Administration's America's Byways program, a Byway Management Plan must be prepared that includes a "signage plan that demonstrates how the State will insure and make the number and placement of signs more supportive of the visitor experience."

The primary objective of a wayfinding system employed along the Byway is to provide a well-signed byway appropriate to its multi-jurisdictional nature and historic context while working with and reinforcing existing signage systems already in place. The following discusses the existing wayfinding systems in place, issues that need to be addressed and a set of strategies recommended to achieve the Byway's wayfinding goal.

### ***Existing Conditions***

Currently the Byway has two distinct signage systems in place.

### ***Scenic Byway Signage (with accompanying Statewide Byway Guidebook and Map)***

The majority of the route is marked with either a confirmation or directional sign. Field reviews were conducted in July and September 2007 to identify places along the Byway where adjustments to existing signage may be needed to help visitors find their way along the Byway. (See page 81 for a list of signs that need to be modified or where new signs are needed to simply make the existing system work better.)

The guidebook and map were recently revised and reprinted (2007) and are readily available at existing State Welcome Centers and in limited supply at existing County Visitor Centers.

The Maryland State Highway Administration's Office of Operations and Traffic Safety (OOTS) has raised concerns about utilizing guide and directional signs for the state system of byways, their relationship to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guidance, and the competition for limited amounts of available space for signage at intersections.

### ***Tourism Area and Corridor Signing Program***

According to OOTS, "Tourist Area and Corridor (TAC) Signing was developed to replace the Attractions Logo Sign program and to address the interest among tourism stakeholders in TODS (Tourist Oriented Directional Sign) programs and other types of tourism signing. The new tourist area and corridor signing program replaces the TODS program, which will no longer be used."



*Existing signage on MD 234 approaching Chaptico*

The Byway falls within the “Potomac Corridor” sign grouping and new signs to attractions that meet minimum state developed criteria were installed in 2007 based on consultation with the Maryland Office of Tourism Development and County tourism offices. Many of the major attractions related to the Byway’s themes are now signed from the major roads leading into Southern Maryland.

Some adjustments to both the State Scenic Byway signs and the Tourist Area Corridor Signing will be needed to meet the requirements of the National Scenic Byway designation. The TAC signing program should perform a post-construction evaluation of the system, including both users of the highway and residents of Southern Maryland, to determine the effectiveness of the program and to identify any additional problems where refinements to the system will be beneficial.

### **Wayfinding Issues**

The following key issues have been identified through the corridor planning process and need to be addressed as part of the Byway Management Plan

- The byway can be entered at multiple points including at the northern most point, but also at midway points, therefore destinations (north or south) along the Byway need to be clearly identified at entrance points to the Byway (see Map 1, Appendix 1)
- The byway story is best understood by starting at the Point Lookout/Historic St. Mary’s City end of the Byway and heading north, but most travelers will be heading south approaching from the Washington DC metropolitan area, from Baltimore/Annapolis, or from the 301 corridor across the Harry W. Nice bridge towards La Plata.
- There are several confusing intersections where it is difficult to follow the Byway. The route has multiple turns and route numbers. However, it may not be possible to have signage at every intersection due to existing regulatory and guide signs already in place and the need to give priority to those signs at complicated intersections.
- Some of the complicated intersections have existing byway signs with multiple directional arrows confusing a visitor that is unfamiliar with the area.
- There are multiple “spurs” or “side trips” leading out to points of land with interesting features or attractions. However, the side trip represents a



*Approaching the Nanjemoy Loop on MD 225*

significant investment in time that needs to be better communicated to the visitor.

- Tourism Area Corridor (TAC) signing has been installed that accomplishes many good goals, and needs to remain the primary signage. However, the TAC system does not incorporate the Religious Freedom Tour byway signs and introduces a new geographic place name that has not been in use and is not identified in the recently published Maryland Byways guidebook, or the state highway map. In some cases destinations that are clearly part of the Religious Freedom Tour, such as St. Thomas Manor, are now also located on the “Potomac Corridor”. This will be very confusing to a visitor that is unfamiliar with the area.
- The Tourism Area Corridor signs are large and represent a significant presence in the landscape. In some cases they are placed in locations that disrupt high quality views or are highly visible from historic sites along the Byway.

### **Proposed Strategies for Making It Easier to Find and Follow the Byway**

The following strategies apply specifically to the Religious Freedom Byway and should be implemented to make it easier to find and follow the Byway. Three strategies are proposed:

- Organize wayfinding system along a spine
- Use signs and printed media to direct travelers
- Implement techniques for managing byway-related signage
- Modify existing wayfinding signage

### Strategy 5.1: Organize wayfinding system along a main spine with loops and spurs to destinations

By organizing the Byway as a spine from Port Tobacco to Point Lookout, the existing TAC signing can be used to direct travelers to the Nanjemoy Loop and the spurs, all of which are already signed as attractions along the main spine of the Byway.

### Strategy 5.2: Use signs and printed media to direct travelers

Traveler information will be provided by both signage and guidebook (or other information provided at visitor centers and sites) using the minimum signage necessary to follow the Byway and find visitor facilities, attractions, and points of interest that are related to the primary themes of the Byway. Table 3, below, illustrates the wayfinding needs for the Byway and whether those needs should be provided by Sign or by Guidebook (including GPS/Web-based directional information).

### Strategy 5.3: Implement techniques for managing byway related signage to maintain character defining features

In St. Mary's County, both the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners expressed the desire to consolidate the number of signs along county roadways. The following strategies are designed to accomplish this goal.

- 1) **Consolidate off-premise signs** – Where attractions have been included in the TAC signing program, eliminate duplicative or unneeded off-premise signs (for example, remove the off-premise sign to St. Thomas Manor that is also signed on the TAC sign). SHA should continue

to monitor and enforce state control of billboards visible from state designated scenic highways. (See roadway character for related strategies.)

- 2) **Print Tear-off Map Pads and Byway Guides**

- (also see marketing strategy 3.1, page 66). Tear-off maps should be revised yearly and distributed at welcome centers, local visitor centers, historic sites and attractions along the Byway, and published on web sites used to market the Byway. (<http://www.visitmaryland.org/>; <http://www.southernmdisfun.com/>; <http://www.stmarysmd.com/tourism>; or <http://www.explorecharles.com/>)

- 3) **Confirmation signs** – Maintain all existing signs located after each turn along the Byway to reassure drivers that they are on the Religious Freedom Tour Byway.

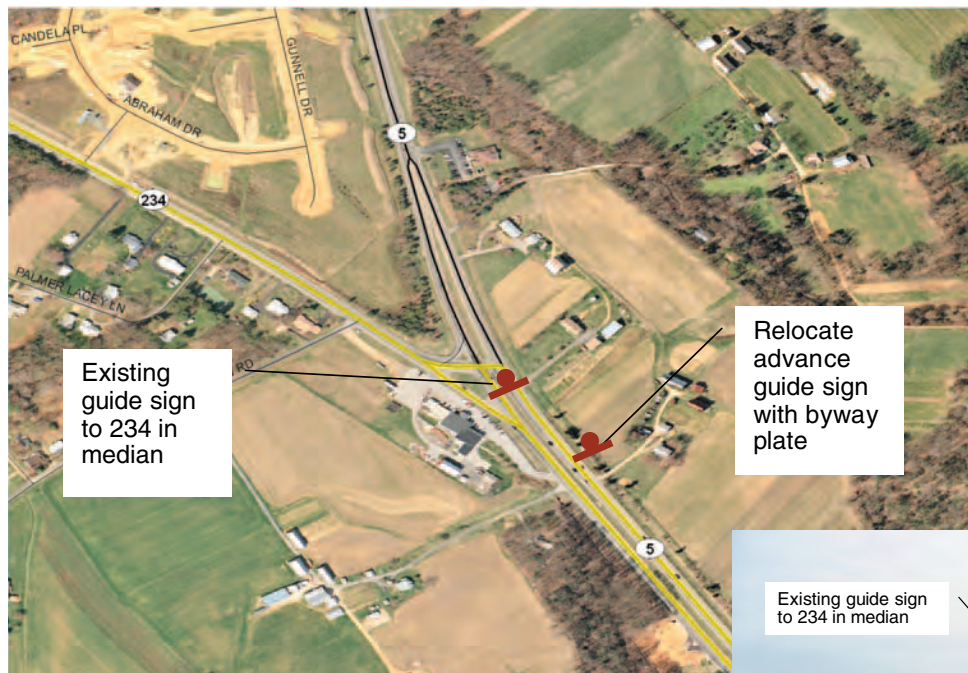
- 4) **Guide Signs** - OOTS has indicated that signing for National Scenic Byways can be navigational in nature in accordance with MUTCD Section 2D-52. These signs should be coordinated with the existing TAC signing in the least intrusive manner possible. OOTS has agreed to place the byway route finding signs on existing highway route markers, thereby reducing the number of byway directional signs. Upon designation as a National Scenic Byway, the prototype shown on page 79 (lower left) will be used.

### Strategy 5.4: Modify existing wayfinding signage to make it easier and safer to follow the route using the following general concepts.

Due to the complex nature of the intersections along the Religious Freedom Byway and to remedy some problems with the existing byway signage, the following general concepts are recommended for consideration.

	<u>Sign</u>	<u>Guide</u>
Getting to the Byway – see MAP, attachment 2	No	Yes (welcome center, need individual brochure for
Visitor information upon arrival at the Byway (direct traveler to visitor center or kiosk)	Yes – TAC signs should direct to	No (digital/web-based kiosks currently not available)
Following the route (decision points)	Yes – as much as practical	Yes, guidebook needs to be supplemented with
Finding Places (use TAC corridor signing – but guidebook needs to be	Yes (TAC)	Yes (revision needed or brochure)
Finding services	Sign to visitor info center and direct	yes





Existing signs approaching the turn for MD 234 from MD 5 northbound. The byway sign is confusing to driver's and implies that they should continue on MD 5, rather than turn left onto Budds Creek Road.



**PROBLEM AREA:** Turn required, but there is no room for byway navigational sign (See photo and map, above.)

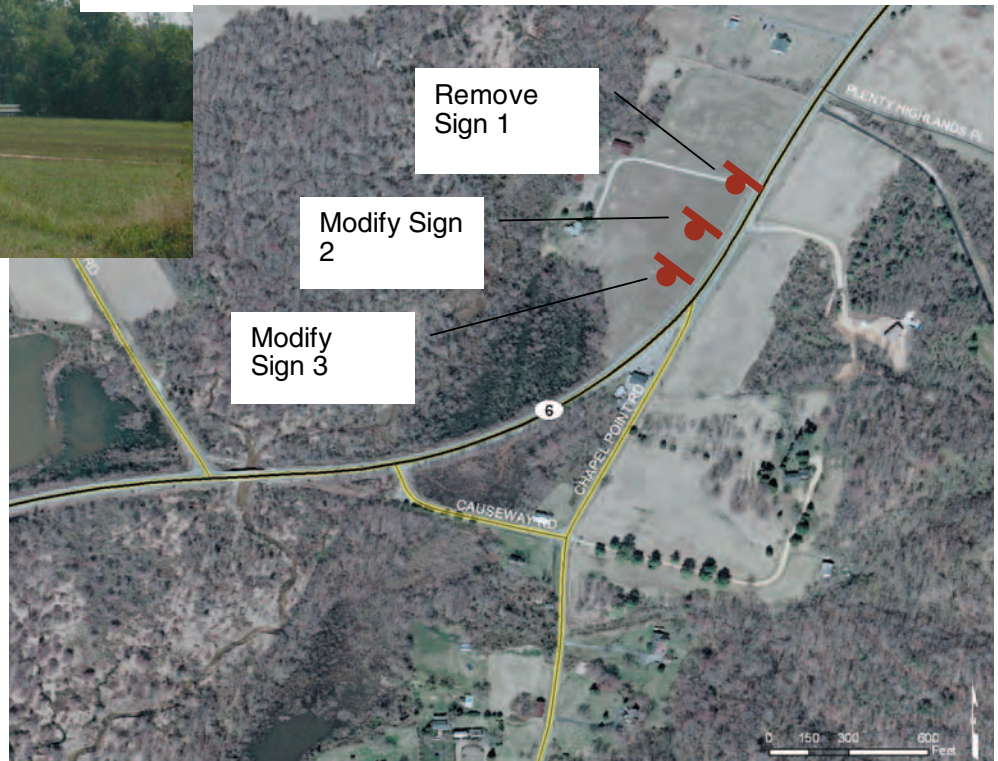


Turning movements at some intersections are difficult to sign due to the complexity of existing regulatory, warning and guide signs that take precedence over the Byway navigation signs. Along MD 5, at the turnoff to Budds Creek Road the scenic byway sign is a confirmation sign falsely assuring the driver that they should keep going straight ahead, rather than following the Byway to the left.

Upon designation as a National Scenic Byway, the State Byway sign would be removed, and replaced with the America's Byway logo applied to the existing route marker signs as per the guidance contained in Section 2D.52 from MUTCD (as shown at left).



Existing directional signs approaching Port Tobacco on MD 6

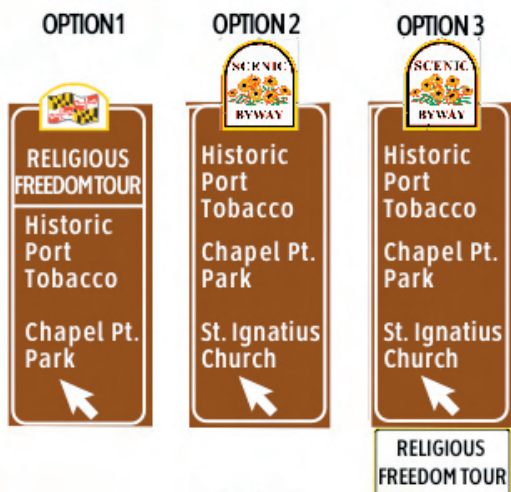


**PROBLEM AREA:**  
Approaching the Byway from another road with a choice in direction

The photo (above) and map (right) illustrates a recurring problem when the Byway is a loop (MD 6, at Chapel Point Road). The byway sign in the photograph is very confusing. The new TAC signs make no reference to the Byway further amplifying the confusion. The following are potential approaches to solving this problem. All three of the options

involve removing Sign 1, the Scenic Byway Sign, and replacing it by modifying the TAC corridor sign.

Option 1: Use the direction provided under Section F, of the TAC Guidelines for Sequential Signs, treating the Religious Freedom Byway as a destination with sites along the two routes. With this option, one of





the destinations would have to be removed to keep within the 3 message limit.

Option 2: Modify the TAC Corridor sign guidance by replacing the Maryland Crest with the Scenic Byway Logo. A confirmation sign would be placed following the turn. This option would identify both turning movements as the scenic byway using the Byway logo as an identifier, but waiting until after the turn is made to confirm that it is the “Religious Freedom Tour”.

Option 3: Modify the TAC Corridor sign guidance by replacing the Maryland Crest with the Scenic Byway Logo and the Byway nameplate below. This option would not require confirmation after the turn or alternatively keeping the crest, and putting a modified byway logo sign below.

An additional scenario can be applied using the variation for Option 2 shown on page 80 would be to use the tear off-map to help drivers decide whether to take one of the branches of the Byway that extends down to the Potomac shore. Currently there are some conflicts with the way those and the Byway route are signed as noted in next subsection.

The preferred approach from the Office of Traffic and Safety (OOTs) is to designate one portion of the byway as the spine (in this case the route towards the left heading towards Chapel Point. The turn to the right would then become access to the Nanjemoy Area with the destinations shown on the Tourism Area Corridor Signs.

### ***Getting to the Byway***

Appendix 1, Inventory Maps, includes the Byway access and attractions map, noting the routes that will primarily be used to get to the Byway, whether or not there is a nearby visitor information center along that route, and the locations of Primary and Secondary visitor attractions and sites. (See discussion under Goal 2, Interpretive Strategies for definitions of Anchor and Secondary visitor sites.)

### ***Wayfinding Needs/Locations***

The following locations should be considered for modifications or additions to the existing wayfinding system. Some minor adjustments are needed and described below.

- Heading west along Port Tobacco Road from Valley Road – existing Religious Freedom Tour sign points in three directions (not possible at that intersection) and two attractions signs point in opposite directions – too many signs, each pointing in a different direction. (Possible solutions shown in the example of MD 6 at Chapel Point Road, on page 80.)
- Intersection of Edge Hill Road (southern end) and Rock Point Road via US 301 –no existing signage here; however, current byway route crosses over US 301. This is not possible because the crossover is closed. The solution is to determine how to get across US 301 (probably turn onto US 301 and follow US 301 until U-turn – or some other way – to return to byway route) and place appropriate directional guide signs.
- Religious Freedom Tour signs direct visitors to St. Clements Island from Budds Creek Road (Rt. 234) via Maddox Road (Rt. 238) while attraction signs direct visitors to St. Clements along Colton Point Road (Rt. 242). Solution is to provide wayfinding signage for both routes.
- Intersection of Budds Creek Road (Rt. 234) and Point Lookout Road (Rt. 5) – northbound Religious Freedom Tour sign is situated too close to intersection, too late to make turn, lack of arrow induces driver to go straight on Rt. 5 instead of turning left on Rt. 234. (Possible solutions shown in the example of MD 5 at MD 234 above.)
- Intersection of Point Lookout Road (Rt. 5) and Washington Street in Leonardtown – poor visibility of existing Religious Freedom Tour sign (located under gas station sign) can be remedied by moving the sign.

### ***Proposed Wayfinding/Signage***

The following locations are in need of additional wayfinding information for drivers to adequately follow and/or find the route:

- Turn off from Indian Head Highway (Rt. 210) – need sign indicating that, from Indian Head Highway, Hawthorne Road (Rt. 225) takes you to the start of the Byway at Chicamuxen Road (Rt. 224)
- Intersection of Chicamuxen Road (Rt. 224) and Hawthorne Road (Rt. 225) – need sign indicating that the Byway proceeds straight on Hawthorne or to the right along Chicamuxen



- Intersection of Port Tobacco Road (Rt. 6) and Ironsides Road (Rt. 425) – need sign indicating that the Byway makes right turn onto Ironsides Road
- Intersection of Hawthorne Road (Rt. 425) and Durham Church Road – need sign indicating that the Byway follows Old Durham Church Road (inclination is to stay on main road – Rt. 425 – rather than follow what looks like secondary road)
- Intersection of Port Tobacco Road (Rt. 6) and Valley Road – need sign indicating that Mt. Carmel spur extends up Valley Road and need sign southbound on Valley Road indicating that the Byway continues west along Port Tobacco Road
- Intersection of Chapel Point Road and Irving Road – need sign indicating that the Byway veers to right on Irving Road
- Intersection of Irving Road and US 301 – need signs from both directions indicating right turn onto US 301 from Irving Road onto US 301 (southbound) and left turn from US 301 onto Irving Road (northbound)
- Intersection of Popes Creek Road and US 301 – need sign indicating left turn from Popes Creek Road onto US 301
- Intersection of Popes Creek Road and Edge Hill Road – need sign heading west on Popes Creek Road indicating Cobb Island to south and Zekiah Swamp to north (the Byway goes in both directions)
- Intersection of Popes Creek Road and Edge Hill Road – need signs northbound and southbound on Edge Hill Road indicating turn onto Popes Creek Road
- Intersection of Rock Point Road (Rt. 257) and Rt. 254 signs from both directions indicating turn in the Byway route
- Intersection of Edge Hill Road (northern end) and Budds Creek Road via US 301 – need signs in both directions navigating route along US 301 to connect Edge Hill Road and Budds Creek Road
- Intersection of Colton Point Road (Rt. 242) and Oakley Road (Rt. 470) – need signs from both directions indicating turn in the Byway route
- Intersection of Point Lookout Road (Rt. 5) and Newtowne Neck Road – need signs from both directions indicating turn for Newtowne Neck spur
- Intersection of Washington Street and Point Lookout Road (Rt. 5) – sign on Washington Street northbound indicating left turn onto Point Lookout Road
- Intersection of Fenwick Street and Point Lookout Road – need sign northbound on Rt. 5 indicating turn onto Fenwick Street



# Religious Freedom Byway Implementation

## 5.1 Overall Considerations

The primary need for the management of the Byway is to ensure that there is a steady and continuous effort to achieve the goals spelled out in the Byway Management Plan. Currently, a management team consisting of representatives from each County, the Southern Maryland Heritage Area, the State Highway Administration, the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Maryland Historic Trust, and the Maryland Department of Planning, is serving in this capacity. However, each of the members of the management team have additional responsibilities that limit their time available to work on the Byway.

outside consultants or vendors, processing payment of invoices, record keeping, and grants administration to implement goals and strategies.

- 6) Work with the private sector, institutions, churches and managers of historic sites and visitor attractions on behalf of the byway to encourage business participation in implementing the byway management plan, especially in relation to the interpretation and heritage tourism strategies outlined in the plan
- 7) Work with and encourage participation from the Byway Advisory Committee including ensuring that adequate participation is achieved from the private sector and adjoining property owners along the Byway.

### Strategy 6.1: Adopt Corridor Plan

As a first implementation step, each county should adopt the Corridor Management Plan by reference. This will strengthen the Byway's chances for national designation and funding.

### Strategy 6.2: Hire a Byway Manager

A Byway Manager or Byway Steward is needed to take a leadership role regarding implementing the plan. The Byway Manager is funded through scenic byway program implementation grants from the Federal Highway Administration. A twenty percent match is required which can come from labor as long as it has a non-USDOT-funded source. The Byway Manager should take responsibility for the following activities:

- 1) Pursuit of National Scenic Byway Designation – responsible entity for implementing the plan
- 2) Communication with all stakeholders along the byway with regard to issues facing the Byway
- 3) Speaking out on behalf of the Byway with regard to land use, transportation, conservation, and heritage tourism development matters to ensure that the Byway has a voice in deliberations that affect its potential success as one of the primary touring routes through Southern Maryland.
- 4) Identify opportunities for public and private grants to implement the priority projects spelled out in the Byway Management Plan.
- 5) To manage grants awarded on behalf of the Byway including the hiring of any needed

### Strategy 6.3: Organize the byway strategies into specific programmatic areas and establish small, three to seven person subcommittees, to implement the strategies

#### 1) Heritage Tourism:

The representatives from each county's Destination Marketing Organization, the director of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area, and representatives for the sites along the byway should coordinate their activities to ensure that the Byway marketing efforts, along with the interpretation and education activities are well coordinated and present a unified image to the community and the visitor. This subcommittee should be responsible for coordinating, acquiring funding, producing and distributing the following in a coordinated manner:

- 1) printed materials
- 2) web-presence
- 3) front-line training
- 4) media coverage
- 5) development of interpretive materials
- 6) development of educational programs
- 7) marketing for group tours
- 8) integration with Capital Area tourism programs

#### 2) Stewardship Activities:

A second subcommittee should be formed with representatives from each county's Department of Land Use and Growth Management and Preservation

Program, along with private conservation and historic preservative organizations identified in the Byway Management Plan. This subcommittee should be responsible for the pursuit of funding for preservation, conservation and enhancement projects along the Byway including the following:

- 1) Conservation and preservation easement program (or ensuring that the Byway's Conservation or Preservation priorities are part of other organizations agendas)
- 2) Coordination with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Bureau of Land Management, as well as private landowners and non-governmental organizations, regarding implementing the Byway related facilities along the Nanjemoy Loop
- 3) Coordination with county Land Use and Open Space Plans to ensure that the Byway's conservation and enhancement priorities are identified in the Comprehensive Plan and are considered in deliberations regarding future land use issues along the Byway
- 4) Advocacy for the adoption of Byway specific design guidelines in each County as identified in the Byway Management Plan
- 5) The use of adopt-a-highway, community tree-planting and other volunteer efforts to maintain the Byway

### **3) Transportation Programs**

A third subcommittee should be established to work with the Maryland State Highway Administration and each county on monitoring the planning and design of new transportation projects to ensure they address the Byway's needs and incorporate Context Sensitive Solutions as part of the project planning and design process. Of particular importance are the following activities:

- 1) US 301 improvements
- 2) MD 5 approaching Leonardtown
- 3) Making adjustments to the wayfinding system
- 4) Ensuring that bridge replacement projects maintain the open bridge rail designs
- 5) Working with local government to improve access management strategies in the vicinity of Leonardtown and La Plata.

## **5.2 Permanent Management Entity**

A permanent management entity is needed to submit a nomination for National Scenic Byway. Each byway

must identify a byway manager, along with a primary tourism contact to whom the public can call for information about the byway.

There are two viable options for establish a permanent management entity:

### **1) Southern Maryland Heritage Area**

From the perspective of managing tourism in the region, the Southern Maryland Heritage Area is the preferred management entity. SMHA offers a strong option for serving as the Permanent Management Entity. However, SMHA has limited staff time available to take on additional responsibilities. In addition, SMHA is a three-county area, and the Byway only includes two of those three counties. SMHA has agreed to take on the role of the Permanent Management Entity and will fund additional staff time through FHWA's funding for corridor plan implementation.

### **2) Bi-County Management Committee**

From the perspective of managing grants, providing tourism information, and coordinating with each county's land use and growth management, transportation, and tourism departments, this option presents another viable possibility to consider in the long-term. The disadvantage is that it would be difficult for such an entity to advocate on behalf of the Byway when there are potential competing interests for grants, economic development or other programs that are broader in scope than the Byway's.

### **Recommendation**

For the near term, the current "Bi-County" Management Team should continue in that role in support of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area as they take on the Byway's Management needs.

The existing Advisory Committee should be maintained and encouraged to sign on for the next phase of implementation. Subcommittees could then be formed that might meet more regularly (bi-monthly) with the full Advisory Committee meeting on a quarterly or semi-annual basis to review progress and review priorities.



### 5.3 Funding:

Initial funding efforts for implementing the plan shall necessarily come from applications to FHWA's America's Byway Program. Funding for a byway manager shall be the highest priority with the funding for an interpretive master plan as the next immediate need.

Once a byway manager is in place, then additional grant applications can be developed from a wider range of sources utilizing the dedicated staff time of the byway manager.

Appendix 4, Implementation Table lists each of the recommended strategies, along with a listing of the possible partners that should be involved with implementing the specific strategy. A preliminary budget has been identified for the initial strategies, along with an indication of the priority, where applicable.

Implementation of the strategies identified in the plan are dependent upon first, the initial hiring of a byway manager, and then second, upon successfully securing funding from outside sources necessary to implement the strategy. The pace at which the plan will be implemented is dependent upon the success of the byway manager in bringing in new funding and resources.

While the byway is ready for visitors now, the success of the byway as a heritage tourism and economic development program will be dependent upon how well the byway manager can first establish a byway organization and then grow the capacity of that organization to help preserve, maintain and enhance the qualities that make this byway experience unique and enjoyable.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Maryland Byways p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> According to §1.170A-14 26, CFR Ch. I, 4-1-03 Edition):  
(iii) Governmental conservation policy— (A) in general. The requirement that the preservation of open space be pursuant to a clearly delineated Federal, state or local governmental policy is intended to protect the types of property identified by representative of the general public as worthy of preservation or conservation [see [http://www.lta.org/publicpolicy/treasury\\_regs\\_on\\_ce.pdf](http://www.lta.org/publicpolicy/treasury_regs_on_ce.pdf)]

<sup>3</sup> Charles County Economic Development/Tourism Office.  
<http://www.visitcharlescounty.com/outdoor1.htm#top>. Accessed 10/22/2007.

<sup>4</sup> Maryland Department of Natural Resources. <http://dnr.state.md.us/publiclands.southern/smallwood.html>. Accessed 5/18/2007.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/myrtlegrove.asp> Accessed 12/20/07

<sup>6</sup> Nature and Experiential Tourism Report and Recommendations for Charles County, MD. Prepared by Fermata, Inc. October 2000. [http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/tourism/charles\\_county.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/tourism/charles_county.pdf). Accessed 1.1.2008. p. 25

<sup>7</sup> Nature and Experiential Tourism Report and Recommendations for Charles County, MD. Prepared by Fermata, Inc. October 2000. [http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/tourism/charles\\_county.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/tourism/charles_county.pdf). Accessed 1.1.2008. p. 39

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Maryland Department of Natural Resources. <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/resourceplanning/nanjemoy.html>

<sup>10</sup> Site prepared for Bureau of Land Management by the William and Mary Center for Archeological Research. <http://www.wm.edu/wmcar/chiles/>

<sup>11</sup> Museum Division – Department of Recreation and Parks. Piney Point Lighthouse Museum brochure.

<sup>12</sup> Charles County Department of Public Facilities. <http://www.charlescounty.org/pf/pg/parks/facilities.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin. [http://www.potomacriver.org/about\\_ICPRB/faqs.htm#lr](http://www.potomacriver.org/about_ICPRB/faqs.htm#lr). Accessed 10/19/2007.

<sup>14</sup> Charles County Comprehensive Plan. p. 8-12.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 8-13

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 8-10.

<sup>17</sup> Charles County Economic Development/Tourism Office.  
<http://www.visitcharlescounty.com/outdoor.htm>. Accessed 10/19/2007.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Maryland Department of Natural Resources. <http://www.dnr.state.nmd.us/publiclands/southern/myrtlegrove.asp>. Accessed 5/22/2007.

<sup>20</sup> “Nanjemoy Naturally – A Shared Vision (2002-2032)”; Charles County Economic Development/Tourism Office. <http://www.visitcharlescounty.com/outdoor.htm>. Accessed 10/19/2007.

<sup>21</sup> Charles County Comprehensive Plan. p. 8-9

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin. <http://>

[www.potomacriver.org/history/regions/region\\_percent2011/section3.htm](http://www.potomacriver.org/history/regions/region_percent2011/section3.htm). Accessed 10/19/2007.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Charles County Comprehensive Plan, p. 8-26.

<sup>27</sup> St. Mary’s County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, p. 40-1

<sup>28</sup> Charles County Comprehensive Plan, p. 10-3.

<sup>29</sup> St. Mary’s County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, p. 40-1

<sup>30</sup> See page 66, Quality of Life in St. Mary’s County – A Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, St. Mary’s County, Maryland.