

## Executive Summary for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area Management Plan

The purpose of this plan is to assist the three counties and many communities of Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore to identify, interpret, and preserve our heritage and find ways to help visitors to enjoy our rich cultural traditions, our scenic beauty and natural resources, and our wealth of history. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee (the LESHC) led the development of this plan, working with local public officials, businesses, nonprofit organizations, civic groups, and individuals. Support for this plan has been provided by Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties, the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, the Rural Development Center of the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, and private donors.

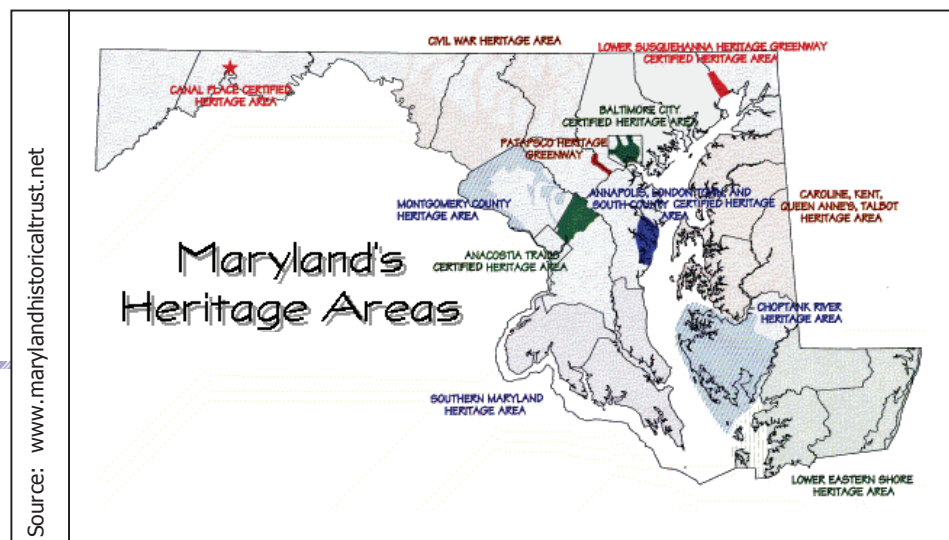
This plan focuses on the development of heritage tourism in the region. The strategies here offer ways to improve interpretation, visitor services, and the connections among the museums, historic sites, natural areas, and communities in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. Discussions of economic development, urban revitalization, and other land-use planning are also featured.

### Action Elements of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Plan

- ◆ Orientation & linkages
- ◆ Interpretation & education
- ◆ Heritage tourism
- ◆ Economic development & targeted investment
- ◆ Stewardship of heritage resources
- ◆ Management

### Heritage Development in Maryland

The underlying concept of heritage development is to enrich communities by enhancing and promoting the enjoyment of unique cultural and natural resources. Heritage tourism is a key element. Across the nation, civic leaders have adopted heritage development as a tool for preserving their communities' distinctive qualities. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee is one of the nation's pioneers in this approach. In Maryland, these regional development initiatives are known as "heritage areas." Under Maryland's program, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area achieved the first step of a two-step program when it became a Recognized Heritage Area in 1997. To achieve the status of a Certified Heritage Area, the Lower Eastern Shore was required to undertake this plan, which is being submitted to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority for a final decision about certification at its meeting in April of 2002.



## A Vision for the Lower Eastern Shore

The Lower Eastern Shore is a land between the Atlantic and the Chesapeake, with a wealth of history, small towns, natural areas, and beautiful landscapes threaded by country roads, trails, and waterways. By the year 2012, this region has become a destination where visitors feel especially welcome. We have found a match between our visitors and ourselves and we all enjoy the region’s natural and cultural heritage, which gives us much to explore. Across all three counties, we freely share and support events, the arts, and community life with visitors and new residents. In the midst of all this activity, we can still put our feet up and enjoy the peace and quiet.

Today, we feel a deep connection to our past, and we continue to recognize our varied cultures and our dependence on one another. All of us – watermen and farmers, merchants and workers, innkeepers and artists, guides and foresters, hunters and anglers, civic leaders and educators – work wholeheartedly to create economic opportunities and regional wealth that sustains our communities, environment, and traditions.

## The Lower Eastern Shore

The strong natural influences of ocean, bay, wetlands, rivers, and the lands in between have created a distinctive cultural landscape here. The region’s location between the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay has meant that it has played an important role in the nation’s development.

The interplay between land and water is a distinguishing characteristic of the Lower Eastern Shore, with its complicated pattern of ocean, bays, sounds, rivers, marshes, and swamps. Small towns and numerous unincorporated communities, many bound by close contact with one another across the water, also contribute greatly to the region’s profoundly rural identity. The total population of the region is 155,934. As visitors move throughout the region, they experience a landscape influenced by different eras. Eighteenth-century river and bay communities give way to nineteenth-century railroad towns and twentieth-century neighborhoods.



The early nineteenth-century Teackle Mansion in Princess Anne is a focal point for one of four areas identified for targeted state investment in the first phase of this plan.

## Strategy for Orientation and Linkages

The landscape is central to the presentation of the Lower Eastern Shore. Within this landscape, roads and waterways are not only characteristic features of the landscape, but are also the means of experiencing the unique offerings of the region. This plan proposes the creation of an integrated network for the orientation of visitors and the linkage of sites, attractions, communities, and resources.

### Key Actions for the Linkage Strategy

- ✓ Create one and possibly two **new welcome centers** in addition to the three existing ones.
- ✓ Create **three regional interpretive centers** to be developed in phases:
  - ◆ Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, Salisbury
  - ◆ Ocean City Boardwalk, Ocean City
  - ◆ Pocomoke River Discovery Center, Pocomoke City
- ✓ Establish **local visitor centers** in historic towns and villages, using existing interpretive sites, businesses, or specially developed sites.
- ✓ Design a **comprehensive wayfinding system** comprising a regional signage system, brochures, visitor guides, guidebooks, and one or more websites. Establish **standards for graphic identity**.
- ✓ Combine previously designated scenic roads with additional scenic secondary roads to create the **Lower Eastern Shore Primary Scenic Road Network**, to link communities and attractions. Add interpretation so they can be enjoyed in their own right.
- ✓ Support planning for National Scenic Byway designation of the proposed **Lower Eastern Shore Scenic Byway Loop**.

## Strategy for Interpretation and Education

Interpretation is the means of bringing the heritage of this region alive for residents and visitors. At its best, interpretation that provides learning opportunities that are entertaining as well as educational. Overall, the foundation that exists for a regional interpretive system here is well-developed. Difficulty in maintaining public accessibility to existing sites and creating more interpretive opportunities is a matter of resources, not a lack of community support. The number of events such as fairs, parades, festivals, and celebrations that are offered by communities in this region is also commendably high. Though well-recognized, only modestly tapped for interpretation are the rich living traditions here: the dialects, stories, trades, arts and crafts, music, foods, and other aspects of unique lifestyles in this region.

## Strategy for Heritage Tourism

Increasing visitation will help Lower Eastern Shore towns and interpretive sites to attract more investment. Such investment is critical to maintaining the economic vitality and thus the preservation of these historic places. In order for heritage tourism to succeed, regions must vigorously protect their cultural and natural resources, create a critical mass of quality attractions, provide business owners with technical support, and selectively target public investment where it will have the greatest impact. Heritage areas must also provide visitor information in the form of signs, maps, and brochures, link sites in an appealing way, and continue to improve the quality of regional amenities, such as accommodations, restaurants, and stores.

### Key Actions for the Interpretive Strategy

- ✓ Create an interpretive advisory committee
- ✓ Develop an interpretive plan
- ✓ Set regional interpretive standards
- ✓ Focus on critical early actions at four sites situated close to one another near the center of the region and within easy reach of ocean city, which effectively cover all thematic topics and historical periods. These four sites are: the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art; Pemberton Historical Park; Teackle Mansion; and Furnace Town
- ✓ Undertake more regional interpretation
- ✓ Establish a regional network of interpretive sites
- ✓ Promote community interpretation and outreach
- ✓ Develop new sites or initiatives to support interpretive themes
- ✓ Reach out to schools, colleges, and universities in the region

### High Priority Existing Interpretive Sites for Phase 1

- **Assateague Island** visitor facilities (state and federal)
- **Calvin B. Taylor House Museum**, Berlin
- **Chipman Center**, Salisbury
- **Crisfield Historical Museum**, Crisfield
- **Furnace Town and Nassawango Creek Preserve**, Snow Hill vicinity
- **Julia A. Purnell Museum**, Snow Hill
- **Life Saving Station Museum**, Ocean City
- **Mariners' Country Down** and Store, Berlin
- **Nabb Research Center**, Salisbury
- **Pemberton Historical Park**, Salisbury
- **Poplar Hill Mansion**, Salisbury
- **Salisbury Zoo**, Salisbury
- **Smith Island Cultural Center**, Smith Island
- **Teackle Mansion**, Princess Anne
- **Ward Brothers Workshop**, Crisfield
- **Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art**, Salisbury
- **West Side Heritage Museum**, Mardela Springs

### New Sites Identified as Priorities for Phase 1

- **Bending Water Park**, near Marion, Somerset County, a large cultural center and museum focusing on the heritage of the Accohannock Tribe.
- **Deal Island Skipjack Museum**, Deal Island Harbor and Wenona, Somerset County, celebrating the largest fleet of skipjacks on the Chesapeake Bay.
- **Tangier Sound Natural History Initiative**, Crisfield and region, Somerset County, a combined approach to existing and proposed sites and programs: the 4,400-acre Martin National Wildlife Refuge and Mullins Education Center, a Chesapeake Bay Foundation facility, both on Smith Island; the 3,426-acre Monie Bay unit of the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (CBNERR) near Deal Island; and the Jenkins Creek Environmental Center proposed for a location near Crisfield.

### Topics for Interpretation

- A Watery World: The Living, Natural Bays and Rivers of the Chesapeake and the Atlantic
- The Land of Plenty: Peoples and Settlement on the Lower Eastern Shore
- Lifelines and Livelihoods: Commerce, Productivity, and Transportation
- Military and Naval Heritage on the Lower Eastern Shore
- Great Escapes: Recreation and Renewal
- Land, Water, and Action: Stewardship and Sustainability

The nature and impact of tourism varies across the three counties. Ocean City is one of the major tourism destinations on the East Coast, attracting millions of visitors each year. Its ample supply of overnight accommodations, dining opportunities, and shopping is an advantage in building regional tourism. Beyond Ocean City, unique tourism resources offer visitors a chance to experience a splendid, fragile landscape via trails and preserves for boating, biking, hiking, and birding. The region is rich with these opportunities. The experiences of American Indians, African Americans, and European settlers in the region hold interesting stories for many visitors.

### **Why Pursue Heritage Tourism?**

- Travel is one of the world's largest industries
- Travel is worth billions of dollars to the United States economy
- Tourism is the #1 industry in 17 states – in all others, it ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>d</sup>
- Maryland, 2000: Visitors spent \$8.3 billion
- Lower Eastern Shore, 2000: 15,000 jobs – \$311million payroll – \$62 million local taxes

### **Strategy for Heritage Tourism**

#### **Goals for the Visitor Experience**

- All communications with visitors will reflect the special character and hospitality of the region
- Visitors will know when they enter the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area
- Interpretation of the region's major themes will be found at every historic, natural, and cultural site
- Every visitor will experience access to the water
- Every visitor will encounter our arts and cultural traditions
- Every visitor will experience at least one great meal with local foods

#### **Target Markets**

- Ocean City visitors – families & convention visitors
- Regional weekend visitors
- Nature tourists
- Group tours

#### **Target Promotions**

- For all, promote nature experiences, outdoor recreation, and heritage experiences
- For "convention companions" and group tours, promote the arts, unique shopping, locally made crafts and products, and museums

#### **Actions for Marketing and Communications**

- ✓ Create a brand name and unique tag line
- ✓ Achieve consistent positioning among all three counties
- ✓ Emphasize the region as a single whole
- ✓ Develop a cooperative marketing program
- ✓ Use many more packages
- ✓ Develop a media strategy for each target market
- ✓ Create a unified regional calendar
- ✓ Upgrade the regional web site
- ✓ Measure visitation and results consistently across the region

**Focused Investing: Criteria for Target Investment Areas**

- ✓ High potential for private investment
- ✓ In need of the MHAA program incentives
- ✓ Measurable preservation and economic development in five years
- ✓ Linked to management plan strategies
- ✓ Already designated for revitalization
- ✓ Committed local government and private interests
- ✓ Ready to go and competitive statewide

http://www.oceean.com



**Benefits of a Certified Heritage Area**

- 50% matching grants for programs – up to \$50,000 per grant
- 50% matching grants for LESHCH operations – up to \$200,000 over five years
- Grants for marketing of new tourism products – up to \$50,000 per county
- Rehab tax credits for non-historic structures
- Local property tax reductions for rehab (local government option)

**Benefits of Target Investment Areas**

- All Certified Heritage Area benefits, plus:
- 50% matching grants for capital improvements – up to \$100,000 per grant
- Tax credits for non-listed/non-designated structures
- Loans for preservation, attractions & visitor services
- Loans for income-producing economic development projects

**185,000 new visitors could stimulate:**

New hotel/inn rooms:	261
New restaurant space:	9,000 square feet
Retail space:	8,000 square feet
Private investment in new or rehabbed buildings:	\$13.8 million
New permanent jobs:	209
More local tax revenues:	\$568,900
More state tax revenues:	\$384,100

**Economic Benefits**

Increased visitation to the Lower Eastern Shore through the heritage area program is expected to result in as many as 185,000 new visitors per year after five years. Their spending should add \$11.4 million to existing tourism spending. While some of the new visitors to heritage area attractions will be Maryland residents, 60 percent are expected to come to the heritage area from outside the state, bringing new dollars to state and local economies.

Each of the heritage area counties will receive increased tax revenues from existing property, income, room, and food and beverage taxes. Somerset County is predicted to receive \$13,500 in annual new taxes in Somerset County, Wicomico County is predicted to receive \$80,200, and Worcester County is predicted to receive \$475,200. The disparity in these figures reflects the disparity in the tourism base in the three counties.

**Return on State Investment –** Although the State of Maryland will incur costs as a result of its investment in heritage tourism here, it will also see rewards. Capital improvements to visitor attractions, increased marketing, and programmatic linkages among attractions can generate a measurable increase in annual state tax receipts. Annual tax revenues to the state could potentially cover the state’s contribution toward annual programming costs and still provide an annual rate of return on investment (capital and one-time programming costs) ranging between 1.6 and 3.6 percent.



### Target Investment Areas and Their Special Projects

#### The Salisbury Crescent

Ward Museum – Regional Interpretive Center  
 Chipman Cultural Center improvements  
 Pemberton Historical Park improvements

#### Princess Anne

Teackle Mansion improvements  
 Business development for downtown  
 Streetscaping on Prince William Street  
 Burgess Early Americana Museum  
 Local Visitor Center & Archive at Old Library

#### Downtown Ocean City

Regional Interpretive Center Kiosk for Somerset Street  
 Façade improvement program (expansion)  
 Streetscaping on Talbot and Dorchester Streets

#### Pocomoke City

Pocomoke River Discovery Center – Regional Interpretive Center

### Potential Target Investment Areas

Bending Water Park  
 Town of Berlin  
 Town of Crisfield  
 Town of Mardela Springs  
 Mariners’ Country Down  
 Town of Snow Hill  
 A “Watermen’s Culture TIA,” linking waterside communities that might benefit from tourism, including Smith Island, Deal Island, Wenona, Nanticoke, Rumbley, and Frenchtown

### Strategy for Stewardship

The Lower Eastern Shore’s scenic roads, historic communities, agricultural landscape, and rich variety of natural resources create the setting that visitors come to experience. The quality of the Lower Eastern Shore landscape is also central to local residents’ quality of life. Stewardship of the resources that give the Lower Eastern Shore its character is in the region’s long-term interest.

Stewardship is a responsibility shared by governments, non-profits, private property owners, and residents. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council (LEHSC) can support preservation and conservation in the region by structuring its partnerships, programs, and projects to actively support and promote existing and potential stewardship initiatives. Many programs and tools are available to assist communities in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area in protecting natural, historic, cultural, and landscape resources.

All three counties of the Lower Eastern Shore face significant challenges from growth and development. Over the past fifty years, development around the region’s cities, towns, and principal roadways has undermined the economic viability of the downtown cores, reduced the amount of farmland, and compromised the visual character of the region. Strong county initiatives are required to address the growth management issues of the region.

Salisbury and Ocean City have experienced the most significant growth in recent years. Princess Anne, Pocomoke City, Crisfield, and other towns have grown as well. Although this growth is a sign of economic vitality, it has frequently occurred at the expense of the visual character of the communities that the heritage area has been created to help preserve and promote. The primary roads that visitors use to enter and travel through the region are the very locations where the distinctive character of the Lower Eastern Shore has been most compromised.

Agricultural land is fundamental to the character of the Lower Eastern Shore. Approximately 30 percent of the region's land is agricultural, totaling an estimated 250,000 acres. Up to 95 percent of the agricultural land on the Lower Eastern Shore is cropland, primarily growing corn and soybeans for use as poultry feed. The Maryland Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program in Somerset County encompasses 76,000 acres, or 35 percent of its total area, and 75,000 acres in Wicomico County.

## **A Strategy for Stewardship**

### **LESHC will support stewardship by others:**

- Projects contributing to a high-quality landscape and visitor experience
- Groups seeking to preserve resources, to improve their leadership, and to raise funds
- Technical assistance
- Monitoring, publicizing, and rewarding stewardship

### **Recommended Actions for Partners – Land & Landscape**

- Regional planning for greenways
- A region-wide action strategy shared by land trusts
- A public education program to inform landowners about conservation easements and the donation of lands
- An agricultural development plan for each county (or a region-wide plan)
- Design guidelines for new commercial development, including landscaping
- Signage design guidelines

### **Recommended Actions for Partners – Historic Resources**

- A research program focused on local history
- Updates of historic resource inventories in all counties
- Historic preservation plans in counties and municipalities
- More local historic districts and the use of protections under Maryland law
- A public education program to inform property owners and communities about using the federal and state rehabilitation tax credit programs

## **A Strategy for Managing the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**

The LESHC expects to benefit the entire region by:

- Fulfilling the role needed to obtain state support for local heritage initiatives;
- Building capacity for civic enterprises, thereby adding value to existing efforts, through grants, technical assistance, and other recognition and support; and
- Organizing a way for the grassroots supporters in the community to express their talents and interests in heritage, traditional culture, and the environment, to the benefit of all.

Critical partners in the certified heritage area include local governments, tourism agencies and businesses, and interpretive sites. Foremost among LESHC partners is the Tri-County Council, a regional consortium of all local governments in the region. This new agency will undertake regional economic planning that will reinforce the heritage area.

**Public Outreach** – The LESHC will seek a high level of public recognition. It will focus on producing a newsletter, upgrading the LESHC website, deploying directors to make many public presentations, and recognizing those working to conserve resources in the community with awards, technical assistance, or funding for special projects. An annual report will detail progress in implementing this plan.



**Funding and Sustainability** – Support for the LESHHC will continue to be a combination of government and foundation grants, individual and corporate contributions, and in-kind services. With the potential of substantial support for operations and initiatives from the MHAA, the LESHHC has within its reach the possibility of substantial growth, starting with a full-time director position to augment the current part-time assistant position. The purpose of the heritage area is not to grow a large staff but to assure that as much funding as possible is devoted to creating a regional system of linkages and interpretation, including support for partners' programs. The roles of the staff remain to be defined as the heritage area and its demands evolve, but by the end of five years, four full-time positions are forecast – a director, an assistant, and two specialists in subject areas most needed by partners.

### **A Strategy for Managing the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**

#### **Role of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council**

- Designated management entity
- Change name to "Council" from "Committee" to signify permanence
- Add six representatives of local government to Board of Directors
- Work closely with the Tri-County Council on economic development
- Work closely with County tourism offices on regional product development and marketing

#### **First priorities for LESHHC action:**

- Branding
- Interpretive plan
- Wayfinding plan
- Regional brochures
- Public outreach
- Strategic organizational planning and board development

#### **First priorities for partner actions:**

- Regional Interpretive Centers
- Assistance to Target Investment Areas
- Lower Eastern Shore National Scenic Byway Loop
- Existing & new interpretive resources
- Interpretation along linkages
- Planning for more linkages

### **National Heritage Area Designation for Maryland's Eastern Shore**

The LESHHC adds its voice to that of the Caroline-Kent-Queen Anne's-Talbot Recognized Heritage Area and the Choptank River Recognized Heritage Area, its two sister heritage areas located completely on Maryland's Eastern Shore, in calling for Congressional recognition of an Eastern Shore National Heritage Area. Such a program would:

- Provide Congressional recognition and special federal funding;
- Lead to more support from the National Park Service;
- Lead to support from the Alliance of National Heritage Areas;
- Add Maryland's Eastern Shore to the special map of National Heritage Areas for national and international promotion; and
- Position Maryland's Eastern Shore for special regional initiatives.

## Chapter 1 **Introduction**

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Deal Island, Somerset County

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to assist the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area in meeting the requirements for state designation as a Certified Heritage Area. The plan was developed by the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee (LESHC) in cooperation with county and municipal officials throughout the region. The Committee provided much of the input needed to produce the plan and encouraged the participation of businesses, nonprofits, civic groups, and individuals. During the planning process, the Committee and the consulting team identified strategies for the development of heritage tourism in the region. This plan represents the culmination of that process.

The interpretive strategy is the driving force behind the effort to make the Lower Eastern Shore a more attractive destination for visitors. This strategy is coupled with a careful examination of the potential for developing additional visitor services and for improving linkages among interpretive sites and the region's many small towns. The end result will be a better visitor experience. Discussions of economic development, urban revitalization, and other land-use planning are also focused on this goal.

To ensure the success of the heritage area, a management structure assigns responsibility for implementing the goals presented here. For a Recognized Heritage Area to be designated a Certified Heritage Area, municipal and county governments in the region must adopt this management plan as an amendment to their comprehensive plans. An appendix lists these jurisdictions together with key contacts, requirements for public notices and meetings, and prescribed timelines for public review.

Without a clear sense of direction, individual communities might continue to promote themselves separately, with less emphasis on their shared heritage. Unless communities join together to convince visitors that there is a variety of activities and sites throughout the region, visitation is likely to remain modest. Most visitors are looking for a place that offers at least a full-day experience – and most of the interpretive resources in the area offer only an hour or two. Moreover, since visitors are largely oblivious to the boundaries between counties and municipalities, it is important to cultivate a perspective of the region as a whole.

## **Heritage Development**

In recent decades, communities have begun to realize the potential economic and social benefits of preserving and promoting their heritage through regional programs targeted to designated heritage areas, which are multi-county regions that share components of the same geography, culture, and history. By identifying some of the most compelling “stories” in a particular region, heritage areas have created an interpretive framework that makes it easier for residents and visitors to understand local heritage.

The underlying concept of heritage development is to enrich communities by enhancing and promoting the enjoyment of unique cultural and natural resources. Across the nation, civic leaders have adopted heritage development as a tool for preserving their communities’ distinctive qualities in a time when look-alike sprawl is rapidly becoming the norm. Heritage development provides a forum where conservationists, preservationists, recreation enthusiasts, cultural organizations, business interests, elected leaders, and civic groups can share ideas and address community concerns. In Maryland, as in other states, communities have joined together in regional development initiatives known generically as “heritage areas.” Throughout the nation, they are also known as “heritage parks,” “heritage regions,” or “heritage corridors.”



Downtown Berlin is a favorite stop for travelers headed to Assateague Island in Worcester County. On the left is the Atlantic Hotel, which has played a key role in the town’s resurgence. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

Each heritage area is unique in a specific sense; however, among their general characteristics in common are physical resources that convey a sense of place and tell a compelling story, and a network of public and private partners committed to working together to develop and achieve a common vision for the future. These visions usually encompass economic revitalization. Heritage development efforts can foster a quality of life that is conducive both to the growth of small tourism-related businesses as well as larger employers in other industries.

Some heritage areas are linear, following shorelines, rivers, highways, or canals, while others are more expansive. They can encompass anywhere from a handful of communities to large regions. Some heritage areas, such as the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, have attained national recognition by Congress. Others are either part of state programs or independent initiatives undertaken by local groups. The National Park Service is now providing technical assistance to several national heritage areas. Other federal agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service are participating in heritage development projects outside designated heritage areas.

Resources within a designated region should share a common history and sense of place in order to be appropriate for heritage development. Characteristic cultural and natural resources should unite the region and tell a compelling story. Finally, the area should have a strong network of public and private partners who share a common vision for the region. Many problems facing communities today, especially rural communities, are beyond the ability of local governments to handle independently. Strategies to address sprawl, pollution, and economic stagnation must be developed within a regional forum in order to have a lasting impact. Heritage development offers a means of integrating preservation and conservation into these larger mainstream planning and economic development initiatives.

Heritage development supporters recognize that preserving a region's historic character requires alliances among partners at the local, state, and national levels. Cultivation of such alliances has allowed heritage areas to develop broad-based, grass-roots support for their projects over the past decade, enabling them to compete more effectively for limited financial and human resources. Philanthropic organizations are more inclined to fund interdisciplinary projects, and reduced funding levels now require increased cooperation between governmental agencies. Politicians continue to be strong proponents of multi-county and inter-agency projects where public funding can leverage private investment and catalyze action at state and local levels. On the Lower Eastern Shore, the Tri-County Council is one such example. In today's economic climate, each dollar must do more and stretch further.

Public education and economic revitalization are two primary components of heritage development. Regional inventories identifying and documenting significant cultural and natural resources are generally among a heritage area's first endeavors. These inventories provide the basis for conservation planning and program development, including educational programs that focus on regional heritage and community values. In addition, they instill a sense of regional pride, and draw attention to cultural, natural, and recreational resources that would otherwise remain unknown and underutilized. Heritage interpretation is an important tool used to link resources thematically and illustrate a range of concepts related to regional development.

Heritage development also supports economic revitalization efforts by improving overall quality of life, which assists in retaining and attracting major businesses to the region, and by fostering growth of small business enterprises through related tourism development. Heritage tourism, when planned and implemented in a sympathetic way, can be a useful tool in diversifying local economies; however, residents must have realistic expectations of the role that tourism can play. In order to be a viable economic development tool, tourism must be sustainable over the long term and preserve the integrity of the region's assets. Involvement of local leaders in determining acceptable carrying capacities, saturation points, and degree of community change that may result from tourism is extremely important. Heritage management plans are developed with the intent of guiding economic development in such a way that growth complements the historic and natural character of the region rather than undermining it.

## **Maryland Heritage Areas Program**

In response to the recognition that many visitors come to Maryland to enjoy its history and environment, a statewide heritage area program was initiated in the 1996. To manage the program, the state created the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA). MHAA developed a two-tier system of designation for heritage areas: Recognized Heritage Areas and Certified Heritage Areas. Each of these levels comes with its own set of requirements.

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area became a Recognized Heritage Area in 1997. To achieve the status of a Certified Heritage Area, the Lower Eastern Shore was required to undertake more extensive documentation and analysis of its resources. The purpose of this plan is to provide the documentation necessary for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area to become a Certified Heritage Area. The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority will make the final decision about whether the region will receive that designation.

The management plan is intended to provide the implementing entity and the MHAA with a clear set of strategies for enhancing the existing appeal of the heritage area to visitors over the next decade. MHAA requires the process to constructively involve the public, especially the partners who will be involved in implementing it. To meet the requirements for a Certified Heritage Area, the management plan for Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area must address a wide range of topics. These guidelines are paraphrased and summarized below. The complete text of the guidelines appears in an appendix to this plan.

**Vision and Goals** – Description of the future of the heritage area; goals for achieving the vision

**Significance** – Distinctive features and experiences that make the area unique

**Heritage Resources** – List of resources that are open to the public: historic, architectural, archeological, cultural, natural, environmental, and recreational

**Market Analysis** – Inventory of visitor services such as accommodations, dining, and shopping; analysis of the market for heritage tourism experiences

**Development and Land Use** – Current policies for historic buildings, cultural landscapes, rehabilitation, and adaptive use; the condition of local resources and the market forces that affect them; voluntary and regulatory opportunities for improving stewardship

**Interpretation** – Interpretive themes that highlight important people, places, and events in the area; resources and programs that are available to tell these stories; strategies for strengthening authenticity and continuity

**Linkages** – Physical connections through trails, tour routes, and scenic byways; experiential connections through interpretive themes and events; assessment of the potential for such linkages; packaged visitor services

**Leadership and Organization** – List of local organizations involved in tourism, economic development, and historic preservation; evidence of cooperation between these groups

**Investment Climate** – Strategies for improving investment climate for rehabilitation of historic buildings and conservation of cultural landscapes

**Visitation** – Market analysis identifying target markets; a plan for reaching these markets; assessment of “carrying capacity” and strategies for balancing the impact of visitors and local quality of life

**Economic Development** – Investment approaches that reinforce the area’s character and heritage tourism appeal; strategies for improving the existing natural and built environment; strategies for retaining traditional indigenous crafts

**Stewardship** – Mechanisms to encourage the preservation of cultural, historic, scenic, and natural resources

**Action Plan** – Actions and timeline for implementation

**Costs and Funding Sources** – Costs for capital investments; estimated operating costs for new attractions; potential sources of funds and revenues; suggested participation by state agencies

**Return on Investment** – Predicted results in private investment, new jobs, building rehabilitation, and business activity; overview of anticipated economic performance resulting from the plan’s implementation

**Management, Coordination, and Evaluation** – Governance, staffing, activities and commitments of the primary management entity; tracking methods; strategies for achieving financial sustainability

**Boundaries and Certified Heritage Structures** – Maps showing the recommended boundary of the heritage and boundaries of Target Investment Areas (TIAs); list of Certified Heritage Structures within TIAs

**Management Plan Process** – Partnerships between organizations, local governments, state agencies, private businesses, and property owners; public participation, including at least one public hearing

**Final Plan Documents** – Summary of the plan suitable for distribution; technical appendices

**MHAA Financial Support** – Matching grants for qualifying projects and programs; strategies and criteria for designating TIAs; strategies for achieving private investment; options for MHAA grants, loans, and other support

**Applicant Organization** – Non-profit organizations or local governments; capability of this group to manage and administer funds

**Grant Amounts and Conditions** – Items necessary to qualify for grants, including a local match; percentage of the match that can be in-kind

## **Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee**

Grassroots support has been a key to the success of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. More than ten years ago, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee (LESHC) was founded to promote the region’s heritage. The LESHC was one of the first such organizations in the nation. Since its creation, the committee has been successful at creating marketing materials that highlight the historic, natural, agricultural, and arts attractions in the area. The committee has also been involved in a wide variety of planning projects that are detailed in this plan in relation to the various topics treated chapter by chapter.





A skipjack is pictured in Wenona Harbor, Somerset County. These boats were traditionally used to dredge oysters in the Chesapeake Bay. [Photo by A. Elizabeth Watson]

During the same ten-year period, other organizations in the heritage area sponsored their own planning and development initiatives that worked to support its goals. A few of these other initiatives were coordinated by LESHC members in their roles as elected officials, working professionals, and community volunteers. Others were developed and promoted by non-profit organizations and dedicated individuals operating separately from the LESHC. Through these projects, the people of the Lower Eastern Shore learned to work together to plan for the future of the entire region. The State of Maryland supported many of these initiatives. In the early period of heritage development in the Lower Eastern Shore, important accomplishments included:

**Beach to Bay Indian Trail** – This National Recreation Trail was created by a volunteer organization dedicated to that purpose. The trail links Somerset and Worcester Counties in a loop that highlights the region’s scenic landscapes and cultural resources. It is an accessible trail that is easily identified by the many signs that are placed along the route.

**Delmarva Birding Weekend** – Delmarva is renowned as an excellent location for birding. As a result, birding activities have long been popular among residents and visitors.

**Delmarva Low-Impact Tourism Experiences** – Known as DLITE, this group has promoted kayak trails and other environmentally-friendly activities throughout the Delmarva peninsula.

**Passport Program** – Worcester County developed a “passport” program that resulted in cooperative marketing for many sites and attractions in the Lower Eastern Shore and in Sussex County, Delaware.

**Plan for Maryland’s Coastal Bays** – In 1996, an agreement was signed by the State of Maryland, Worcester County, the Town of Berlin, the City of Ocean City, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect Maryland’s coastal bays. At that time, the signatories agreed to create a joint conservation and management plan for the bay. As stated in the press release announcing the agreement, “The plan will form the basis of future activities needed to ensure that the bays will retain their high commercial, recreational, and ecological values for future generations.” LESHHC members played a significant role in this process.

**Pocomoke River Projects** – These include an “inn-to-inn” canoe trail that connects lodging establishments near the river, and a bogiron water trail along the Nassawango Creek near Furnace Town.

**Salisbury Urban Greenway** – This project aims to connect several parks and other green spaces in the Salisbury area with a trail, signage, and other types of linkages. An ISTEA grant contributed \$695,000 to that portion of the greenway that connects the Ward Museum to the Salisbury Zoo.

**Smith Island Cultural Center** – The preservation and interpretation of cultural traditions on Smith Island is one of the primary goals of this center, which is located on the island.

**Snow Hill Rail-Trail** – This is a one-mile trail that once formed a part of railroad line leading to Snow Hill’s major lumber manufacturer. It is anticipated that this trail might be extended in the future.

**Viewtrail 100** – This is a county-sponsored bicycle trail that loops through Worcester County. A brochure detailing this trail is available throughout the Lower Eastern Shore.

Additional projects from the past and present are addressed in other chapters of this plan.

## **Vision for the Lower Eastern Shore**

### **Vision Statement**

A key requirement of the MHAA management planning process is that the heritage area write a vision to guide its plan. As a part of this process, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee crafted the following vision statement to guide the planning process and the actions that will follow.

The Lower Eastern Shore is a land between the Atlantic and the Chesapeake, with a wealth of history, small towns, natural areas, and beautiful landscapes threaded by country roads, trails, and waterways. By the year 2012, this region has become a destination where visitors feel especially welcome. We have found a match between ourselves and our visitors, and we all enjoy the region's natural and cultural heritage, which gives us much to explore. Across all three counties, we freely share and support events, the arts, and community life with visitors and new residents. In the midst of all this activity, we can still put our feet up and enjoy the peace and quiet.

Today, we feel a deep connection to our past, and we continue to recognize our varied cultures and our dependence on one another. All of us – watermen and farmers, merchants and workers, innkeepers and artists, guides and foresters, hunters and anglers, civic leaders and educators – work wholeheartedly to create economic opportunities and regional wealth that sustains our communities, environment, and traditions.

## **Components of the Vision**

At a public workshop held in April 2001, LESHHC members and other community leaders gathered to discuss the management planning process for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. Among the topics discussed was the community's vision for the future of the heritage area. In addition to the short statement printed above, attendees provided specific suggestions for the implementation of this vision:

**Marketing** – The Lower Eastern Shore will be a regional destination that is broader and more diverse than the beach destination it once was. Marketing will capitalize on the Lower Eastern Shore's unique location between the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay.

**Visitor Experience** – A wide variety of visitors, including families, will regularly visit the region. The Lower Eastern Shore will provide a comprehensively packaged visitor experience. Visitors will find a choice of attractions that are linked together to give them a broad understanding of the region's heritage. They will be entertained and educated about the natural environment, history, and cultural traditions that are unique to the Lower Eastern Shore. The needs of the visitor will be met with a spirit of hospitality.

**Events and Activities** – Residents will share their communities with visitors and encourage them to participate in local activities. Visitors will have a variety of opportunities to discover, explore, and learn.

**Cultural Diversity** – The Lower Eastern Shore will celebrate the heritage of all its people, from American Indians to African Americans, Latinos, and

Europeans. It will embrace its residents, especially those who have recently arrived.

**Environmental Diversity** – The region will continue to respect the fragility of wildlife and aquatic life that is found on the Lower Eastern Shore.

**Sustainability** – The sustainability of the Lower Eastern Shore will be a primary concern of local residents. The region will continue to take pride in its small towns, rural landscapes, waterways, farms, and forests. Stewardship of the natural, historic, and cultural environment will be a familiar theme in local communities.

**Peace and Quiet** – Despite the growth of heritage tourism, the region will retain a sense of life “as it used to be.” It will be a peaceful, meditative, serene, relaxing, and uplifting place where visitors can experience a slower pace of life. At the same time, though, it will have a natural kind of energy to it – it will not be “Sleepy Hollow.”

**Transportation** – Visitors will find a variety of options for “reaching the beach,” including buses, shuttles, and bicycles. The automobile will no longer be a necessary part of what visitors bring with them to the beach.

## **Management Planning Process**

To create this plan, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee and consulting team followed a series of steps. The creation of the LESHC was a catalyst for heritage area planning in the Lower Eastern Shore region. The LESHC later completed the application for MHAA designation as a Recognized Heritage Area. In order to undertake this heritage area management plan, the committee



Beth Somers, Duke Marshall, and Reggie Mariner stand at the gateway to Tylerton on Smith Island, Somerset County. All three of them were involved in the planning process for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. Beth and Duke are natives of the island. [Photo by A. Elizabeth Watson]

raised funds to support its development, and earned the endorsement of county and municipal governments.

The scope for the management plan was developed by the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee (LESHC), which retained the consulting team of John Milner Associates, Inc., in association with A. Elizabeth Watson, Oldham Historic Properties, Shelley Mastran, and Davidson-Peterson Associates. The team wrote the plan with the help of representatives from business, non-profits, and government. Research was conducted at the Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture (at Salisbury University), the Maryland Historical Trust, and other local libraries.

The planning process was designed to gather input from individual residents, local experts, business leaders, civic groups, representatives of nonprofit organizations, and government officials. Workshops were held throughout the region. The consulting team held separate meetings with museum professionals, historians and folklorists, and municipal officials. These meetings helped to frame the strategies in this plan. Before this plan is finalized, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee will seek the endorsement of county and local governments. These governments will later be asked to include the heritage area management plan as an amendment to their local comprehensive plans.

The LESHC Planning Committee guided the process through regular meetings with the consulting team. In the fall of 2001, the draft plan was distributed to committee members for their review. Subcommittees were formed to review individual chapters in more depth. The consulting team made the changes that were requested, and in February 2002, the revised plan was printed and distributed to interested organizations and individuals throughout the heritage area.

## **Public Participation**

As noted above, heritage development relies on public support and recognizes that residents have an important role to play in maintaining a region's quality of life. There is a growing realization that planning initiatives should rise up from individual organizations and constituents at the grassroots level, rather than simply filtering down from government agencies. Heritage development can become a focal point for a community's collective energy. In a number of communities, acknowledging a shared history has helped to dismantle local rivalries and dissolve jurisdictional barriers, enabling residents to set aside past differences and begin to work together on a common agenda.

Heritage development is as much process as product. The goal of heritage partners is ultimately to carry out tangible projects; however, the dialogue and discussion leading up to the implementation of those projects is as valuable as the project itself. The heritage development process can provide a forum where

conservationists, recreation enthusiasts, arts organizations, business interests, civic groups, and the historically inclined can share ideas and voice concerns for their community. Such dialogue can generate a common vision of the future—livable communities with stable employment, green space, recreational opportunities, vital cultural traditions, and public awareness of history. Participants in this dialogue can derive significant benefit from collective experience and by sharing in each other’s successes and failures. Moreover, they build relationships that can lead to more effective leadership in other vital community initiatives.

Heritage development projects rely on strong, even charismatic leadership, dedicated partners, and farsighted participants all working to maintain forward momentum over the long haul. Participants in heritage development preserve and promote awareness of natural and cultural resources through a variety of initiatives from educational and interpretive programs to planning and infrastructure development for community projects, such as greenways, recreational facilities, and Main Street revitalization. The combined interests of participating partners guide heritage development projects and determine their focus, since the fundamental power of heritage development derives from community consensus and combined resources.



In Pittsville, Wicomico County, specialty vegetable crops and a beautifully renovated old country store give visitors a feel for the agricultural communities of the past. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

## **Contents of This Plan**

This plan provides an overview of what the region has to offer, what visitors expect, how the region can be marketed to visitors, what messages they will hear, and how they will move around the area. Designation as a Certified Heritage Area will benefit the Lower Eastern Shore by providing a framework for the continued development of attractions that support and enhance the region’s identity.

Each of the nine chapters of this plan is designed to meet the requirements of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA). The contents of the plan are as follows:

**Chapter 1 – Introduction**

Chapter 1 outlines the contents of the plan and describes the requirements necessary for the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area to become a Certified Heritage Area.

**Chapter 2 – Historical Development and Significance**

One of the most basic goals of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is to understand the region’s history and interpret its significance to the public. Chapter 2 provides a historical summary and a statement of significance that are designed to focus interpretive efforts on the most important aspects of the region’s history.

**Chapter 3 – Orientation and Linkages**

While local attractions and interpretive resources are a primary focus of visitors’ attention, the quality of their experience depends in large measure upon how they move through and are introduced to the region’s landscape and communities. Chapter 3 presents a system of orientation and linkages around which visitor experience and interpretation can be structured.

**Chapter 4 – Interpretation and Education**

Chapter 4 discusses the ways in which the region’s historical, natural, and cultural “stories” will be presented to visitors. Educating residents and visitors about the character and significance of the region’s resources is an important MHAA requirement, and a critical component of the Lower Eastern Shore’s development as a heritage area.

**Chapter 5 – Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services**

A key goal of the Maryland Heritage Areas program is to stimulate tourism growth and its associated economic benefits. In this chapter, readers learn about the opportunities that heritage tourism can provide in the Lower Eastern Shore.

**Chapter 6 – Economic Development and Targeted Investment**

Chapter 6 outlines a strategy for promoting economic development opportunities that highlight the region’s historic, cultural, and natural character. It explains the purpose of Target Investment Areas (TIAs) and the process for their establishment. The grants and loans accorded to projects within TIAs are an important benefit of the Maryland Heritage Areas program.

**Chapter 7 – Stewardship**

Stewardship of the region’s natural, cultural, and historical resources will help to protect the region’s future as a tourism destination. Chapter outlines the range

of stewardship resources, the stewardship role of the heritage area, and the various programs and mechanisms that are available to governments, non-profits, and businesses to preserve important resources.

**Chapter 8 – Management**

Although the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee has existed for more than ten years, its responsibilities will increase when Lower Eastern Shore region becomes a Certified Heritage Area. The scope and structure of a new management entity, to be known as the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council, is discussed in Chapter 8.

**Chapter 9 – Implementation**

The goals of this plan cannot be achieved without a strategy to implement them. This chapter summarizes the strategies that must be undertaken to ensure the success of the plan.



## Chapter 2

# Historical Development and Significance

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Teackle Mansion, Princess Anne, Somerset County

## Chapter 2

# Historical Development and Significance

The Lower Eastern Shore has a rich cultural landscape that is the primary resource through which the region’s history and significance can be revealed. A cultural landscape is a landscape created through human activity. It is comprised of the combination of natural and man-made influences characteristic of the region. It includes patterns of settlement, transportation networks, agricultural patterns, industrial development, and the many other ways in which human endeavors have shaped the character and appearance of the land over time.

Natural resources play a strong role in the evolution of a cultural landscape, providing both opportunities and constraints. Over time, the cultural landscape changes as economic, technological, and social change influences how people use the land. These changes can be seen and read and can be used to understand, appreciate, and interpret the historical development and significance of the region. On the Lower Eastern Shore, the strong natural influences of ocean, bay, wetlands, rivers, and the lands in-between have created a distinct cultural landscape.

Chapter Two introduces the two key issues of historical development and significance that are central to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) program. The resources associated with the heritage of the region are presented in this and subsequent chapters. As quoted from the MHAA guidelines:

**Significance** – “Historically, culturally and/or physically, what makes this place different or distinctive from the areas that surround it or are nearby? What can the visitor learn or experience here and nowhere else, or much better than in other places?”

**Heritage Resources** – “A synopsis of the key heritage resources – historic, architectural, archeological resources, arts and traditional cultural resources, natural and environmental resources, recreation resources that are open or available to the public, and that are supportive of a heritage tourism industry.”

## The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area

To understand the significance of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, it is important to start with its physical characteristics, because the landscape has exerted a strong influence on the region’s historical and cultural development.

The interplay between land and water is a distinguishing characteristic of the Lower Eastern Shore. A complicated pattern of ocean, bays, sounds, rivers, marshes, swamps, and wetlands is evident throughout the region.

## **Location**

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is located in the State of Maryland, near the southern end of the Delmarva peninsula between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. The Delmarva peninsula includes parts of three states: Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is situated in a part of the Delmarva peninsula known as the Eastern Shore. Maryland's southernmost counties on the peninsula – Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester – form a region called the Lower Eastern Shore. The Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area extends across these three counties.

The State of Delaware lies north of the heritage area. The Mason-Dixon Line separates the two states, and the border is marked with a series of historic stone monuments, including a well-known monument at the southwestern corner of Delaware, where it intersects with Wicomico County. To the south, the region borders the Virginia's Eastern Shore, adjoining Somerset and Worcester Counties.

The Chesapeake Bay forms the west side of the region, together with smaller bays formed by the Big Annemessex, Manokin, Nanticoke, Pocomoke and Wicomico Rivers and Dividing Creek. The marshes in this part of the region are the most extensive in the state. The western part of the region also includes several islands in the Chesapeake Bay. Smith Island, home to a unique culture of watermen, has 364 residents (according to the 2000 U.S. Census). Cedar, Deal, and South Marsh Islands are Wildlife Management Areas, and Janes Island is a state park. With the exception of Smith Island and South Marsh Island, which are several miles offshore, the remainder of these islands are separated from the mainland by narrow channels. Of these islands, only Deal Island is accessible by road from the mainland.

On its eastern side, the region is defined by the Chincoteague, Assawoman, Newport, and Sinepuxent Bays (among others), Assateague Island, and the Atlantic Ocean. Although Ocean City is urbanized, Assateague Island is in a largely natural state, with recreational facilities at its northern and southern ends. Maryland's portion of the island is split between Assateague State Park and Assateague Island National Seashore. The Virginia portion of the island forms the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. The mainland landscape of the Lower Eastern Shore is largely farmland and forest. Before Europeans arrived, forests covered most of this area. Today, Pocomoke River State Park and State Forest preserve an important piece of this landscape.

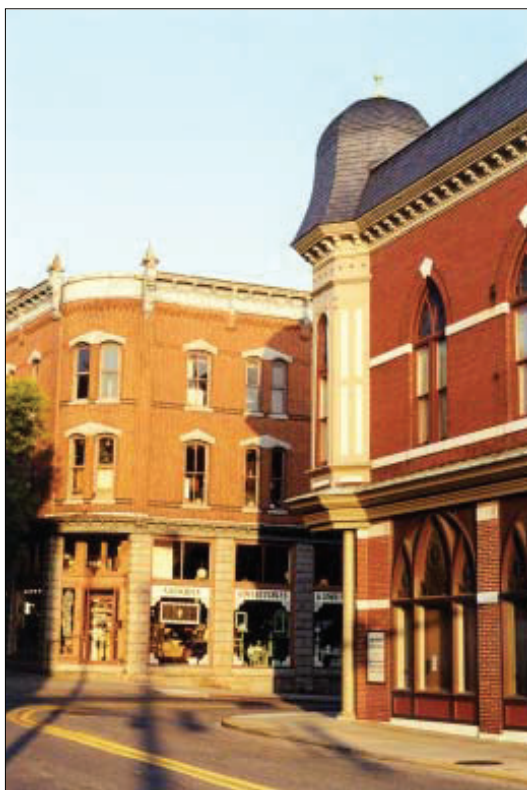
## Transportation

The major north-south routes in the region are U.S. Routes 13 and 113, which extend into Delaware and Virginia. Route 13 links Wilmington and Dover, Delaware, with Salisbury, Princess Anne, Pocomoke City, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Route 113 extends from Dover to Georgetown, Delaware, and then to Berlin and Snow Hill, ending near Pocomoke City where it joins Route 13. Maryland Route 528 is also an important road link to the area, because it connects Ocean City with Delaware Route 1, a major highway that extends north to Interstate 95. The major east-west corridor in the region is U.S. Route 50, which links Ocean City with Salisbury, Cambridge, Easton, Annapolis, and Washington, DC. Although these highways are instrumental in connecting the Lower Eastern Shore to nearby cities, they also bypass many small communities that would like to attract additional visitors.

The relatively flat topography of the region has allowed roads to be constructed along fairly straight corridors between towns, bridges, and landings. This landscape has also made it convenient for development to take place, because bodies of water and wetlands are the only natural constraints. The ease with which development can occur has made it challenging for the region to preserve its cultural resources and natural habitats.

## Cities and Towns

Small historic communities and a few cities are an integral part of the Lower Eastern Shore landscape. Although all of the villages, towns, and cities in this region are in some way historic, this plan concentrates on those that have retained a high degree of historical integrity or “completeness.” Among these communities are Berlin, Crisfield, Mardela Springs, Princess Anne, Salisbury, Snow Hill, and downtown Ocean City. These towns and many others have the potential to become heritage tourism destinations, if residents choose to develop their resources for that purpose. A variety of federal and state programs, such as tax credits for rehabilitation of



The architectural character of downtown Salisbury in Wicomico County has the potential to draw visitors into the commercial heart of the old city. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

historic buildings, can assist communities in reaching that goal. These programs are addressed in Chapter 7 (Stewardship).

On the Lower Eastern Shore, the number of incorporated municipalities varies by county. Somerset County has two, Wicomico County has eight, and Worcester County has four. The region is also home to a variety of villages and crossroads communities that include only a few homes and businesses. Although towns and cities are important centers of activity in the Lower Eastern Shore, the region's islands and necks of land are equally important. Strong ties bind the communities that are situated along Chesapeake Bay. Despite their distance from each other by road, these communities have stayed in close contact with one another across the water.

## Population

Population figures reveal the region's largely rural character. Compared to the more urbanized counties of the mid-Atlantic region, much of the Lower Eastern Shore has remained sparsely populated. Although the region has remained largely rural, however, the population of each of the counties has continued to grow (see Table 2.1). By comparison with the population of the United States as a whole, which grew approximately 13 percent between 1990 and 2000, the Lower Eastern Shore grew at a rate of about 17 percent. While Somerset County grew at a slower pace than the U.S. average, Wicomico kept par with the rest of the country, and Worcester exceeded the average by almost 12 percent.

**Table 2.1 Lower Eastern Shore Population and Growth**  
 (Counties and Region)

County	1990 population	2000 population	% change
Somerset County	23,440	24,747	5.6
Wicomico County	74,339	84,644	13.9
Worcester County	35,028	46,543	24.7
<b>Lower Eastern Shore</b>	<b>132,807</b>	<b>155,934</b>	<b>17.4</b>

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000.*

The largest incorporated municipalities in the region are Salisbury, Ocean City, and Pocomoke City. Salisbury is by far the largest city, with a population of 23,743 in the year 2000. Ocean City has a population of 7,173 year-round residents, and Pocomoke City has 4,098. Seven other towns in the region have a population between 1,000 and 4,000 residents. In this group, Fruitland has the largest population, followed by Berlin, Crisfield, Snow Hill, Princess Anne, Delmar, and Pittsville. The smallest incorporated municipalities in the region are Willards,

Hebron, Sharptown, and Mardela Springs, all of which have a population under 1,000 residents.

While Pittsville nearly doubled in population between 1990 and 2000, Crisfield lost residents. Many of the other towns in the region grew between 30 and 40 percent: Delmar, Willards, Berlin, Princess Anne, and Ocean City. Hebron and Salisbury experienced slightly slower (but still impressive) growth. Those that grew most slowly (excluding Crisfield) were Mardela Springs, Pocomoke City, Sharptown, Fruitland, and Snow Hill. These towns grew more slowly than the national average of approximately 13 percent.

Growth rates for incorporated municipalities are widely varied across the region, as shown in Table 2.2:

**Table 2.2 Lower Eastern Shore Population and Growth**  
 (Incorporated Municipalities)

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>1990 population</b>	<b>2000 population</b>	<b>% change</b>
Salisbury	20,592	23,743	15.3
Ocean City	5,146	7,173	39.4
Pocomoke City	3,922	4,098	4.5
Fruitland	3,511	3,774	7.5
Berlin	2,616	3,491	33.4
Crisfield	2,880	2,723	-5.5
Snow Hill	2,217	2,409	8.7
Princess Anne	1,666	2,313	38.8
Delmar	1,430	1,859	30
Pittsville	602	1,182	96.3
Willards	708	938	32.5
Hebron	665	807	21.4
Sharptown	609	649	6.6
Mardela Springs	360	364	1.1

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000.*

Population figures do not tell the whole story of development in the region, however. Suburban sprawl has become an important issue as developed areas around Salisbury and Ocean City have steadily increased in size. Housing developments surrounding these cities have also grown more popular with people seeking a second home or a place to retire. Major road corridors such as U.S. Routes 13, 50, and 113 have attracted increasing amounts of commercial development, which

has continued to have an impact on the economic fortunes of smaller towns outside these corridors. Some of them, however, have embraced new businesses such as antique stores, galleries, bookshops, and restaurants. Berlin is one such example.

### **Statement of Significance**

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area enjoys a varied landscape comprised of water, agricultural land, and forests. Small towns and villages contribute greatly to the region's identity and sense of community; greater than half of the region's incorporated municipalities have fewer than 4,000 residents each. Smaller still are the numerous unincorporated communities spread throughout the landscape. It is these communities that give the region its rural character. Even the famous town of Ocean City is home to only 7,371 year-round residents. Overall, the region's incorporated municipalities range in size from the village of Mardela Springs, with 364 residents, to the City of Salisbury, with 23,743 residents.

The built environment of the region's small towns and the outlying farms testify to the changing nature of the region's economy over the past three hundred years. As visitors move throughout the region, they experience a landscape influenced by different eras. Eighteenth-century river and bay communities give way to nineteenth-century railroad towns and twentieth-century industries. Remarkably, some towns still retain the clean edge between town and country that was a hallmark of earlier landscapes. Wetlands and forest glades remind visitors of the land that American Indians have known for millennia. The region's wealth of archeological sites provides valuable information on the region's prehistoric and historic cultures.

The bays, sounds, rivers, salt marshes, and forested wetlands of the Lower Eastern Shore are the basis for a maritime heritage that gives this region an important



Somers Cove in Crisfield, Somerset County, is a testament to the region's maritime heritage. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

place in the history of early European and African settlement of North America. The Lower Eastern Shore is home to a range of cultural traditions that contributed greatly to America's historical development and national identity. The only interruptions in the landscape of the past are the heavily traveled corridors such as U.S. Routes 13 and 50 that have become mainstays of transportation between nearby metropolitan areas and the beach.

## **Historical Overview**

The Lower Eastern Shore is significant in state and national history because its geographic isolation allowed it to retain a distinct natural and cultural environment, while at the same time, its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay gave it an important role in nearly all periods of the nation's development. Long before that time, American Indians hunted, fished, and cultivated crops here. Although the region's prehistoric development is not publicly interpreted to the same extent as the story of European settlement, its importance is not forgotten.

**Prehistoric Settlement (8500 BC-17th Century AD)** – The Paleo-Indian period begins about 8500 BC, when it is estimated that human beings first settled in the Lower Eastern Shore. This long period was followed in 1500 BC by the Archaic period, in which semi-nomadic groups moved from the Atlantic Ocean to the Chesapeake Bay, according to the season. Human settlements in the Woodland period that began about 1500 AD were characterized by a more settled existence that placed greater importance on agriculture. These people included the Accohannocks, Nanticokes, Pocomokes, and others. While corn and squash were among their most important crops, they also foraged for nuts and berries and were adept at fishing in tidal areas. Their settlements were often found adjacent to the region's many rivers and bays. It is into this context that European explorers arrived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Italian sailor Giovanni da Verrazano, who sailed into Chincoteague Bay in 1524, is the first European known to have seen this area.

**Cultures in Contact (17th-18th Centuries)** – The early European exploration of the region led to the creation of Maryland, a province under the proprietary control of Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore. The entire three-county region within the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area was once contained within a single county now called "Old Somerset." This county, which was created by order of Lord Baltimore in 1666, also encompassed a large part of today's Sussex County, Delaware. Old Somerset was composed of five "hundreds," or administrative divisions. The county was also divided into Anglican parishes, each of which included two of the county's hundreds.

In the late seventeenth century, three different peoples – Africans, Europeans, and American Indians – lived in an uneasy relationship with one another in Old



Somerset. American Indian ways of life were quickly altered and eventually displaced by Europeans and the enslaved Africans that were brought to the area. Free African Americans also settled in the region in the seventeenth century. By the early eighteenth century, Old Somerset was the most populous county in Maryland, with more than 5,000 residents. European settlements during this period were focused on agriculture. Wheat and tobacco were among the earliest crops planted for export.

During this time, Captain John Smith of Jamestown, Virginia, made many voyages up the Chesapeake Bay, creating detailed maps of the region and noting the cultural traditions of the American Indians he encountered. Some of the sailors who followed Smith, however, were less interested in studying the territory than they were in making their fortune. For a time, pirates became a regular sight on the bay.



The Whitehaven Ferry on the Wicomico River has connected Wicomico and Somerset Counties since European settlers first arrived in the area. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Settlement and Trade (18th-19th Centuries)** – Colonial settlement intensified during this period, and newly arrived Europeans began to rely heavily on slavery and maritime trade. Population increase led to the creation in 1742 of Worcester County from the eastern part of Old Somerset. The border between the two counties extended through Salisbury, which was split along Division Street. The ready availability of lumber made shipbuilding one of the region’s key industries, and also led to the creation of an iron furnace (now Furnace Town) in Worcester County. In addition to the larger ships that were often docked at the region’s wharves, a variety of smaller craft including sloops, skipjacks, clam boats, and scows plied the bays and rivers. Salisbury became an important port for Somerset and Worcester Counties.

The Lower Eastern Shore played a key role in the American Revolution and War of 1812, because many of its settlements were accessible by water, the

most efficient means of transportation at the time. Important naval battles such as the 1782 Battle of Kedges Strait took place between Smith Island and South Marsh Island in the Chesapeake Bay.

The agricultural output of the region earned it the nickname the “Breadbasket of the Revolution,” because of the important role it played in the nation’s grain production. Wheat, corn, and oats were raised here, and grist and saw mills were found throughout the region. Butter production was a staple in Worcester County, and tobacco was an important crop in Somerset County (which included much of today’s Wicomico County). Before the Civil War, slavery played a large role in agricultural production. In the 1850s, for example, approximately 20 percent of Worcester County’s residents were enslaved Africans.

As the region grew, a variety of Christian religious traditions took root here, from Roman Catholics to Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. Evidence of the region’s important role in the history of American religious life is still visible in churches and cemeteries throughout the region. Methodist itinerant preachers such as Francis Asbury and Freeborn Garrettson traveled throughout the region and won many converts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

**An Expanding Economy (19th-20th Centuries)** – The last of the region’s three modern counties was created in 1867, when the Maryland General Assembly created Wicomico County from parts of Somerset and Worcester Counties. This change reunited Salisbury, which became the new county’s seat of government.

Cash crops became the basis for an increasingly prosperous Lower Eastern Shore region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Truck farming of tomatoes and peaches was commonplace. The modern poultry industry also began to take shape.

Crabbing, oystering, and fishing became mainstays of the region’s economy. These industries were linked by a growing network of railroads that connected the region to urban centers, especially Philadelphia. Steamships constructed in Salisbury and Whitehaven were used to ferry residents and



“Peelers” await their turn to become soft shell crabs in these “crab floats” on Deal Island. Somerset County watermen produce a fresh supply of crabs from Tangier Sound and surrounding areas. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

visitors up and down the Wicomico and Nanticoke Rivers. Boats were also built in Sharptown. Other types of manufacturing became increasingly important to the region's economy. While Lower Eastern Shore towns on the Atlantic coast and Chesapeake Bay did not increase significantly in population, river towns such as Salisbury, Princess Anne, and Snow Hill grew into economic centers.

As Worcester County became popular as a seaside destination, the United States Lifesaving Service became a visible presence. The service operated in Ocean City until the 1920s, when it became a part of the United States Coast Guard. In 1933, Ocean City and the fishing industry were reshaped by a storm that created an inlet a short distance south of downtown. This change opened Chincoteague and Assowoman Bays to boats in the Ocean City area. Previous to that time, these bays were only accessible to the ocean from the south, near Chincoteague, Virginia.

**Tourism and Transportation (20th-21st Centuries)** – In 1952, a momentous change in the region's transportation network created opportunities and challenges for the Lower Eastern Shore – the completion of the William Preston Lane, Jr. Memorial Bridge (Chesapeake Bay Bridge) linking Maryland and Washington, DC, to the Eastern Shore. The bridge made the Atlantic beach and eastern Chesapeake waterfront more accessible to travelers from the metropolitan areas across the bay. Ocean City quickly became one of the most popular beach destinations on the Atlantic coast. To protect some of the most sensitive areas along the Atlantic shore, Maryland's portion of Assateague Island was set aside as a National Seashore. Assateague Island has since become one of the most visited National Park Service sites.

While Ocean City's growth was initially concentrated on the island, it eventually spread to adjacent inland communities such as Ocean Pines. At the same time, highway improvements to U.S. Route 50, the principal roadway link between Washington, DC, and Ocean City, made it possible for travelers to drive directly to the shore without stopping in other communities on the way there. While Ocean City prospered from this change, communities in the region's interior began to experience economic difficulties. U.S. Route 50 in Salisbury, for instance, became more of a thoroughfare than a commercial street. The impending completion of the Route 50 bypass around Salisbury may allow the city to reverse that process and reclaim the street's economic viability.

In recent years, the Lower Eastern Shore has begun to see the promise of a renewed economy based on recreation and heritage tourism. While the Chesapeake Bay Bridge made it possible for more visitors to reach the area, it also began to pull business activity away from communities that relied on water and railroad transportation. As roads became the primary means of delivering freight throughout the nation, development began to favor areas that were adjacent to major highways, such as the corridor linking Washington, Baltimore, and

Philadelphia. The boats and railroads that once linked the Lower Eastern Shore to surrounding regions retained their cultural significance to the community, but became less cost-effective as means of transportation.



Marion Station is a recognizable landmark on the road to Crisfield in Somerset County. This building presently houses the Accohannock Museum, which focuses on the history and culture of the Accohannock people of the Lower Eastern Shore. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

The American Indian culture of the area continues to be preserved by members of the Accohannock, Occohannock, and Pocomoke tribes. The old Marion railroad station near Crisfield serves as the Accohannock tribal office and also contains a museum of Accohannock culture. The tribe also plans to build a cultural center known as Bending Water Park. The Occohannock tribe maintains its offices in Pocomoke City.

## **Heritage Resources**

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is comprised of a wide range of heritage resources. It begins with the rich natural resources of bays, ocean, marshes, rivers, and wetlands that define the edges and penetrate to the interior of the Lower Eastern Shore. These water-related resources are rich ecosystems with distinct plant communities and abundant wildlife. They provided an early transportation system, creating dispersed patterns of settlement with wharfs in rivers and inlets, and were basis for development of a strong maritime industry that has changed over time but remains a defining element in the region's character today. Within the boundaries created by the region's water-related systems are the uplands that developed into a rich agricultural landscape.

The cultural landscape of the Lower Eastern Shore is an interwoven network of natural areas, agricultural areas, transportation links, and settlements. Each area of the landscape is made up of combinations of wetlands, woodlands, fields, settlements, transportation links, buildings, sites, and features that change from

place to place, but create a distinctive common whole. The Lower Eastern Shore is a place of dispersed resources, of rich but small-scale pleasures, a rural landscape of great beauty that can be enjoyed with ease and leisure. Because individually its resources are dispersed and small-scale, it is the overall effect of the landscape as a whole that has the most impact and is most important for its experience of the Lower Eastern Shore as a heritage area.

Chapters 3 (Orientation and Linkages), 4 (Interpretation and Education), and 7 (Stewardship) discuss many of the key heritage resources important to development of the heritage area. The appendix to this management plan lists representative individual natural, historic and cultural resources that have been surveyed during the preparation of this plan. However, because of the small-scale, rural, and dispersed nature of the region's individual resources, it is important to underscore that the landscape as a whole is the Lower Eastern Shore's primary asset.

## **Interpretive Resources**

The Lower Eastern Shore has a number natural areas, historic sites, and museums that are open to the public on a regular basis and that contribute to the public's understanding of the region's natural, historic, and cultural heritage. The key interpretive resources important to the presentation and interpretation of the heritage area are outlined in Chapter 4 (Interpretation and Education).

The region's existing interpretive resources will be integrated in their presentations to provide visitors with a comprehensive heritage experience, an opportunity to learn about the region's natural or cultural heritage. In addition to the existing resources, a number of future interpretive resources are planned and under development. These too are noted in Chapter 4. Other types of landscape and interpretive resources include the region's many historic communities, natural areas, scenic roads, and water trails. These resources and their roles are outlined in subsequent chapters.

## Chapter 3 Orientation and Linkages

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Upper Ferry, near Salisbury, Wicomico County

## Chapter 3

# Orientation and Linkages

### Introduction

Linkages refer to a wide variety of connections between sites. These include pedestrian and wayfinding systems, trails, waterways, roads, railroads, public transit, and special transportation services. Chapter 3 discusses how the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area can foster improved linkages for both visitors and residents. It outlines how these linkages between the region’s sites, attractions, communities, and resources can become an organizing principle of the heritage area.

In its requirements for heritage area management plans, the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) emphasizes the importance of “connections” within heritage areas. The MHAA guidelines state:

“One of the key opportunities in heritage areas is to foster more explicit connections – physically via trails, tour loops, and experientially via interpretive threads, cooperative interpretive or special event experiences, etc. The plan should provide an assessment of the potential for such linkages to add to the tourism appeal of the heritage area.”

“Heritage attractions and programs should invite visitors to explore the area by foot, bicycle, automobile, boat, or other appropriate means.”

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is notable for the character and quality of its landscape. The heritage area’s landscape resources – its Atlantic coast, Chesapeake Bay waterfront, rivers, natural and agricultural lands, and historic communities – are a primary reason why visitors come to the region. The landscape is central to the presentation of the Lower Eastern Shore.

Within this landscape, roads and waterways are not only characteristic features of the landscape, but are also the means of experiencing the unique offerings of the region. The management plan for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area envisions pulling visitors away from the region’s busy primary roads and onto the quiet secondary roads where they can slow down and enjoy the area’s scenic beauty. The three counties of the heritage area boast a number of designated scenic roads that are widely recognized and marketed as attractions. The management plan proposes combining these previously designated roads with additional scenic secondary roads, creating a network that will be used to link

communities and attractions as well as to be enjoyed as interpreted experiences in their own right.

There are numerous linkages in the Lower Eastern Shore region connecting places on land and water. Roads, rivers, railroads, trails, and bays all provide ways to get from one place to another. American Indians traveled these routes long before European settlement of the region, commemorated now in the Beach to Bay Indian National Recreational Trail. The Nanticoke, Wicomico, and Pocomoke Rivers and their tributaries, the Chesapeake Bay, the coastal bays, and the many rural roads and trails of the area lead residents and visitors through historic communities, rich farmland, forests, and marshy expanses. Together, these linkages provide a variety of ways to experience the Lower Eastern Shore, and a foundation for a systematic approach to orientation, linkage, and interpretation through this plan.

## **Visitor Orientation and Wayfinding**

Visitor orientation is an essential component of the overall desired visitor experience described in Chapter 4 (Interpretation and Education). Part of the interpretive analysis of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area calls for more information to be made available to help visitors understand what opportunities are present and to help them easily find their way around the region.

This management plan proposes the creation of an integrated network for the orientation of visitors and the linkage of sites, attractions, communities, and resources. Key components of this network for orientation and linkage include:

- State Welcome Centers;
- Regional Interpretive Centers;
- County and Local Visitor Information Centers; and a
- Comprehensive Wayfinding System.

This network is the fundamental organizing concept of the management plan.

### **State Welcome Centers**

Welcome Centers are an important component of the State of Maryland's strategy to attract and provide services to visitors. In Maryland, only state-run centers may be called "Welcome Centers." These centers attract the notice of travelers who enter the state on major roadways. They offer an introductory experience, provide information, introduce visitors to the opportunities available in the region, distribute promotional brochures for attractions and services, help travelers in making lodging reservations, and provide other hospitality services. Welcome Centers are often the first contact point that visitors have in the state. The



quality of that first experience is critically important, as it sets the tone for the entire visit.

On the Lower Eastern Shore, there is currently one such center, the U.S. 13 North Welcome Center. This center is located in Worcester County on U.S. 13 northbound, between the Virginia state line and Pocomoke City.

### **Regional Interpretive Centers**

Regional Interpretive Centers will introduce visitors to the history, culture, and natural heritage of the Lower Eastern Shore and enable them to understand the heritage area's interpretive offerings. These centers will present the area's interpretive themes in a comprehensive and engaging manner and tell visitors where they can go to see and experience more. They are the central organizing facilities through which the region's interpretative themes will be introduced and visitors are to be directed to attractions, communities, and resources. All heritage area visitors should be led through at least one of the Regional Interpretive Centers.

The Regional Interpretive Centers will offer permanent and special exhibits about the region and nearby interpretive attractions, provide maps and other printed materials on the region and its resources, sell guidebooks, and serve as points of origin for guided tours. The centers will encourage visitors to use the heritage area's extensive scenic road network routes to access the region's attractions, communities, and resources.

Given such a role, Regional Interpretive Centers are appropriate for incorporation into existing museums or other interpretive sites. They can also be created at new locations. In addition to their primary interpretive role, the proposed interpretive centers will also be expected to work closely with the network of Welcome Centers and Visitor Information Centers to orient visitors and to provide limited hospitality services.

On the Lower Eastern Shore, given the size of the region and the expected patterns of visitor circulation, three regional visitor interpretive centers are required to implement the heritage area's interpretive and linkage strategies. Their development will be implemented in phases:

**Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, Salisbury** – The first Regional Interpretive Center will be implemented at the existing Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, a Salisbury University program. Interpretation at the Ward Museum can easily be broadened to include discussion of the region as a whole and to introduce the themes of the heritage area. The outdoor exhibits now being planned at the Ward Museum can be designed to provide heritage area interpretation and information to visitors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In part because of the importance of this first Regional Interpretive Center, and to help the city to partner with the museum and take advantage of the expected visitation this can bring to Salisbury, the city is being awarded Target Investment Area (TIA) status for the “Salisbury Crescent,” as described in Chapter 6.

**Ocean City Boardwalk, Ocean City** – In the initial implementation phase of the heritage area, a kiosk will be constructed in a designated older portion of Ocean City’s boardwalk. The kiosk will provide information about the heritage area and its interpretive sites, communities, and resources. In a later phase, Ocean City will create a full Regional Interpretive Center in its downtown boardwalk area as another attraction for its visitors. Just as golf promotions have helped to fill rooms in the off-season, the interpretive center could assist Ocean City in lowering its off-season vacancy rates.



The energy of the Ocean City Boardwalk has drawn visitors to Worcester County for decades. Ocean City has significant potential to function as a gateway for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

As discussed in Chapter 4 Interpretation and Education, a Regional Interpretive Center in Ocean City will help the heritage area to reach the region’s largest existing tourism market helping to fill available rooms in Ocean City. This large existing supply of accommodations is a significant competitive advantage the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area enjoys over other heritage areas in the state. To assist the city in the development of this facility, Ocean City is being awarded TIA status for an important block in its downtown, where the city seeks upscale redevelopment, as described in Chapter 6, Target Investment Areas.

**Pocomoke River Discovery Center, Pocomoke City** – A third Regional Interpretive Center is recommended to provide information for visitors entering the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area from the south. This Regional Interpretive Center will be incorporated into the programming for the future Pocomoke River Discovery Center. At the southern entrance the connection to

the heritage area's extensive scenic road network is particularly important. The Regional Interpretive Center in Pocomoke will help direct visitors to Princess Anne, Snow Hill, Crisfield, and other attractions and resources in the southern portion of the heritage area. The educational and recreational mission of the Discovery Center will help promote the region's natural resources, recreational resources, and waterways.

As with the Salisbury and Ocean City, a Target Investment Area is proposed for Pocomoke City that will assist in developing the funding necessary for the Discovery Center's implementation.

### **County Visitor Information Centers**

In addition to the state Welcome Center, there are two County Visitor Information Centers on the Lower Eastern Shore. These centers are similar to the state's Welcome Centers, but provide information that is more closely focused on the local region. This plan envisions the establishment of two additional Visitor Information Centers at other primary entrances to the heritage area. These centers will work cooperatively to promote heritage attractions and educate visitors about the region. Although it is unlikely that MHAA funding could be obtained for construction of these facilities, they are critical to the region's ability to introduce travelers to local attractions.

### **U.S. Route 13**

**North** – The Wicomico County Convention and Visitors Bureau operates a Visitor Information Center on U.S. Route 13 at Leonard's Mill Pond, near the northern boundary of the heritage area. This attractive center evokes the character of a lighthouse and is appealingly located in a woodland setting by the side of the pond. The center has a staffed information desk, displays of regional attractions, and information on available attractions and services. It also provides visitors with necessary amenities: rest rooms, vending machines, and picnic facilities. The visitors bureau offices, which include a meeting room, are located in the building as well.

**Central** – Somerset County maintains a Visitor Information Center near Princess Anne. The facility is located in a wooded setting and is styled as a traditional rest area. Though smaller than the other two existing facilities, the Somerset Visitor Information Center also has a staffed information desk and other amenities.

**South** – As noted above, the State of Maryland operates a large, comprehensive, and attractive Welcome Center south of Pocomoke City, near the Virginia border. This facility has a staffed visitor information desk,

rest rooms, and other visitor amenities. The presence of a state-run facility at this location makes it unnecessary to locate a regional or county-level facility at the southern gateway to the heritage area.

### **U.S. Route 50**

**West** (Proposed) – The need for a Visitor Information Center along Route 50 in western Wicomico County has already been identified in an independent tourism study conducted by the county. This proposed facility will be important for receiving visitors from Annapolis, Washington, DC, and Baltimore.

### **U.S. Route 113**

**North** (Proposed) – Worcester County has discussed the construction of a new Visitor Information Center on Route 113 near the Delaware state line. This proposed facility is important for the reception of visitors traveling to Ocean City from Delaware and points north. Up to 35,000 vehicles come into the region from Delaware on U.S. Route 113 every day.

This network of Welcome Centers and Visitor Information Centers is critical in setting the context for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area by providing coordinated information on the heritage area as a whole. In addition to providing this introductory information as well as the needed services of visitor contact, information, and orientation, these existing and proposed centers will provide an introduction to the heritage area's major interpretive themes.

New and existing exhibits at these centers should be designed to present the orientation and interpretive framework for the heritage area. While it is important that the heritage area interpretive themes be introduced, the four centers should not be considered interpretive sites. Rather, these centers should direct visitors to a network of Regional Interpretive Centers for a comprehensive presentation of the themes, resources, and interpretive opportunities of the Lower Eastern Shore.

### **Local Visitor Information Centers**

The development of Visitor Information Centers at the local level will be encouraged as a third layer in the heritage area's orientation and interpretive network. These centers will primarily be established in the heritage area's historic towns, though other special locations may be appropriate as well. As the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area begins to attract more visitors, the region's towns and villages will benefit from establishment of these centers providing additional places for visitors to learn about their attractions and hospitality resources. The fully integrated network of Visitor Information Centers will help to enhance the "welcome net" that visitors should encounter everywhere they go.

The purpose of Local Visitor Information Centers is to link communities, local attractions, and businesses by presenting the heritage area themes. Just as Regional Interpretive Centers provide an introduction to the interpretation of the heritage area as a whole, local centers will introduce visitors to local history, resources, and services. This local interpretation will always be presented within the strong framework of the heritage area's overall interpretive themes. While focused and limited in their extent, orientation and interpretation at local centers will establish clear linkages among the regional centers, the community, and local attractions.

Local Visitor Information Centers will interpret their communities, orient visitors to local attractions, and provide information on locally available visitor services. Interpretively, local centers will be especially beneficial to small-scale sites that are only occasionally open to the public or not open at all. As visitors approach towns in the region, they should see signage for the local center as a part of the regional wayfinding signage system. This signage will function as a beacon that invites visitors to explore the town and the surrounding area.

The centers described above may be housed in a variety of ways, based on the opportunities available in each community. These include:

- **Existing Interpretive Sites** – In existing interpretive sites, perhaps the most readily available option for swift action;
- **Businesses** – In businesses willing to take on the additional workload; or
- **Freestanding Buildings** – In freestanding buildings supported by the town and its business leaders.

Local Visitor Information Centers should be open for the key days and hours of each season when visitors need information. Although the existing County Visitor Information Center on Route 13 in Somerset County could serve as the local center for Princess Anne, it is preferable to locate these centers within the historic villages and towns. Berlin, Snow Hill, and Whitehaven should be encouraged to establish these centers. Crisfield's center on 9th Street, near the Somers Cove Marina, should also be designated as a Local Visitor Information Center. The development of these centers should be especially encouraged in communities located along scenic driving routes, such as the Beach to Bay Indian Trail and Chesapeake Country State Scenic Byway.

Although the individual planning for Local Visitor Information Centers is beyond the scope of this plan, towns and villages should begin to examine options for implementing this recommendation. The initiative for the creation of these centers should come from localities, businesses, and attractions. The heritage area will act as a facilitator, coordinator, funding conduit, and quality control manager.

## **Wayfinding**

Wayfinding strategies establish a variety of means that visitors may use to find their way around the region. The wayfinding strategy for the Lower Eastern Shore will link the network of Welcome Centers, Regional Interpretive Centers, and Visitor Information Centers using designated driving routes and other local roads. The strategy will include the use of a regional signage system, brochures, visitor guides, and guidebooks.

In addition to these wayfinding tools, the role of the internet should not be underestimated for orientation and wayfinding within the heritage area. For visitors planning their tours before they arrive, the internet is quickly replacing mailed information packets and other traditional modes of communication. The internet is a superb means of marketing as well as an excellent way of orienting and informing visitors. The heritage area should continue to improve its website by updating the information, providing additional links, and adding more features.

More exotic means of wayfinding include wireless communications through global positioning systems or cell phones. Although these are not addressed in this plan, the LESH and its partners should monitor these growing technologies and note whether they can provide additional wayfinding for visitors.

## **Signage**

As a Phase 1 action, the heritage area should develop design guidelines for a comprehensive signage system for wayfinding within the heritage area. The signage system must be approved by the Maryland Department of Transportation and adopted by the heritage area's three counties. Design guidelines for signs and other media in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area will need to be compliant with and responsive to the statewide heritage area branding identity that is currently being developed for the Maryland Heritage Areas system as well as conforming to the local branding and identity to be created for the heritage area. These guidelines will establish a hierarchy of sign types for various uses and purposes and provide standards for their appearance, fabrication, installation, and use. The following types of signs may be included in this system:

**Gateway Signs** – Gateway signs will be located at the major roadway and waterway entrances to the Lower Eastern Shore. These signs will announce the visitor's arrival in the region and introduce them to a regional graphic identity that is in keeping with the state's heritage areas program. For the benefit of maritime visitors, gateway signs should be placed at the region's marinas.



Investments such as this boardwalk gateway sign in Ocean City, Worcester County, are evidence of local commitment that can help the state's Target Investment Area (TIA) program to succeed. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Directional Signs** – Directional signs will be created to help visitors locate key attractions, communities, and resources. They will be available in a variety of sizes and types for varying needs and conditions. Directional signs will be discreetly used but must be located frequently enough to aid visitors not familiar with the region and its road system. Directional signs would be particularly useful in directing visitors from U.S. Route 50 to towns such as Princess Anne, Snow Hill, and Pocomoke City. The use of directional signs in particular should be coordinated with other more traditional directional signs. The Maryland State Highway Administration and Office of Tourism Development are collaborating on guidance for the twin problems of sign proliferation and sign confusion, balanced against the need for more effective wayfinding.

**Trailblazing Signs** – Trailblazing signs will be used for designated driving routes within the heritage area. They will supplement the existing signs located along already designated routes and will link those routes with additional local roads into a comprehensive Lower Eastern Shore scenic road network. The heritage area's system of trail blazing signs must be coordinated with the state and national scenic byway programs to avoid conflicts and duplication. It is possible that a single sign type could be developed to communicate both scenic byway designations simultaneously.

**Community Identification Signs** – Community identification signs will be available for partnering communities that desire them. It is anticipated that their use will be particularly attractive to the region's smaller historic towns and villages. Their use will signal to visitors that heritage area standards for authenticity, interpretation, hospitality, and levels of service are met by the resources, attractions, and businesses available in the town.

**Affiliation Signs** – Affiliation signs or markers will be used by partnering sites and attractions that wish to have or that already have their own graphic identity and signage system. Affiliation signs could be as modest as a small attachment to an existing sign or could be a supplementary freestanding sign.

**Place Identification Signs** – Place identification signs will be freestanding signs that may be used by attractions that desire them. The signs will feature the name of the location or attraction using the graphic identity established for the heritage area as a whole. It is anticipated that use of these place identification signs will be attractive to smaller sites that will benefit from a visual association with the heritage area. They will also be appropriate for unstaffed interpretive sites and other locations that should be identified for visitors.

**Information Signs and Kiosks** – Information signs and kiosks will be placed in communities, on trails, along the waterfront, and at other locations region-wide. These signs and kiosks will provide information about the heritage area, interpretation about the local community, and maps. They will identify local sites and attractions and will link the locality to other parts of the heritage area. In small communities, information signs or kiosks are an alternative to the establishment of Local Visitor Information Centers. An information kiosk will be installed Ocean City's boardwalk as an early action to inform beachside visitors about opportunities in the heritage area.

**Heritage Area Exhibits** – Introductory exhibits about the heritage area will be installed in partnering attractions, sites, and communities. These exhibits will provide limited information about the heritage area as a whole, as well as interpretation of the heritage area themes associated with the site or attraction. These exhibits are a key means of linking the interpretation at individual sites with the interpretation of other sites and the heritage area as a whole.

**Interpretive Signs** – A variety of outdoor interpretive signs of various sizes and types will be established by the signage design guidelines. These interpretive signs may be used by sites and attractions, by communities, along trails and roadways, and at other locations.

The proposed signage system will have great flexibility within the graphic system established by the heritage area. A variety of types of signs will be available to address specific needs, interests, and locations. The degree of participation in the signage system will be largely voluntary, but some level of participation will be a requirement for the inclusion of attractions and communities in the heritage area. As an additional requirement, the heritage area will establish standards for interpretation and levels of service to be provided by partners. The proposed



signage will be attractive and restrained in appearance and use, using as few signs as possible to achieve wayfinding and orientation needs.

## **Publications**

A coordinated system of publications will be created to promote the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. This system of publications will feature a branding and graphic identity created for the heritage area that is also consistent with the identity being developed for the Maryland Heritage Areas system. Any heritage area marketing materials (such as brochures) will be developed in close partnership with MHAA, with the three counties, and with local destination marketing organizations. To the extent possible, the new system will incorporate and replace other existing regional publications. The region's publications will feature and promote the Lower Eastern Shore as a recognizable and marketable destination, not the individual counties.

**Heritage Area Brochure** – A new brochure will explain the purpose of the heritage area, its network for regional orientation and interpretation, and key partnering attractions and communities. It will include a high-quality map showing the designated links between attractions and communities. It will present the heritage area themes and provide introductory information on communities and attractions throughout the area. This brochure will be similar to, and may replace, the current “Adventures in Travel” brochure produced by the LESHHC.

**Coordination of Existing Publications** – The Lower Eastern Shore has an array of high-quality brochures promoting the counties, regional attractions, resources, and driving routes. As a Phase 1 action, these brochures will be assessed and coordinated into an integrated system promoting the heritage area, its resources, and attractions as a whole. Other existing regional brochures that promote more than one site should be incorporated into the heritage area system, each with a particular interest or theme and each using the graphic identity to be created for the Lower Eastern Shore. County visitor guides, events calendars, and other promotional materials should be coordinated and combined into the system. These materials should employ a common logo, slogan, and graphic identity created for the heritage area that is also consistent with the identity that the state is developing for heritage areas throughout Maryland.

**New Brochures** – New regional brochures will be created around the themes and opportunities available on the Lower Eastern Shore. New local and regional interpretive brochures may be created around:

- **Themes** – Compare and contrast sites that share a common theme.

- **Geography** – Link the sites in a particular area. Individual scenic byways could be featured in their own brochure.
  
- **Interests and Activities** – Emphasize the connections among similar experiences such as water exploration, scenic byways, walking tours, or shopping. Communities should be encouraged to create their own interpretive brochures within the heritage area system. Of particular need are brochures for recreational opportunities and for attractions that appeal to children.

**Heritage Area Guidebook** – A regional guidebook will be created to present the history and resources of the region in more detail than is possible in brochure format. The guidebook will not only provide information on interpretive themes, sites, and attractions, but will help visitors read and appreciate the special landscapes of the Lower Eastern Shore. It will be a valued publication in its own right, like the Maryland Scenic Byways book that the state has recently published. This guidebook will encourage visitors to more thoroughly explore the heritage area and its landscapes. It will be offered for sale and could be spun off as a commercial venture in its second edition.

**Tearsheet Maps** – In addition to the brochures and guidebook, the region will produce an inexpensive map with a title such as “Backroads and Byways the Lower Eastern Shore.” This map will be printed in tearsheet style (torn from a tablet) for distribution to hotels, restaurants, and businesses. The reverse side of the map will provide information on the heritage area; list the region’s interpretive sites and the hours they are open, keyed to numbered locations on the map itself; and have a modest amount of interpretive information. Tear sheet maps could be created by cooperating groups of communities for limited portions of the heritage area as well as the heritage area as a whole.

The proposed system of heritage area publications and other media should be flexible in their design and use. Guidebooks, brochures, maps, and websites are a great help to visitors who are looking for specific, structured experiences within a framework of exploration and discovery. When visitors are given the information they need to find attractions and services on their own, they gain the confidence to experience the back roads and waterways that reveal the true character of the area.

## **Scenic Road Network**

Central to the character and presentation of the Lower Eastern Shore is its landscape of shorelines, waterways, small towns, farms, and woodlands. The

Lower Eastern Shore's network of local roads is not only a key contributing element of the landscape but also the best way for visitors to experience its character. The particular strength of the Lower Eastern Shore is its landscape and natural resources.

The intent of this plan for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is to use the local scenic roads to link communities and attractions as well as to present the themes and stories of the heritage area. After making contact with Welcome Centers, Regional Interpretive Centers, and Visitor Information Centers, visitors will be encouraged to use a designated network of primary local roads to explore the places of their interest and choosing.

### **Primary Scenic Road Network**

The Lower Eastern Shore is known for the beauty and scenic quality of its local roads. A number of the region's local roads have already been designated as scenic attractions and are currently promoted and marketed by the counties and the state. These currently designated roads are shown in Map 3-A and discussed in more detail below.

There are, however, numerous other roads with scenic qualities equal to those that have already been designated. This plan for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area will establish a Primary Scenic Road Network to be used by visitors to link attractions, communities, sites, and resources. The network will include the currently designated scenic roads as well as selected other roads of similar quality.

The roads selected to be part of the Primary Scenic Road Network have been selected not only for their scenic quality, but also to link key communities and attractions throughout the region. Using the Scenic Road Network, it will be possible to select driving loops of varying size and distance. Visitors will be encouraged to explore the Scenic Road Network according to their interests and the time they have available.

The Scenic Road Network will be entirely flexible. It may be entered and exited at any point and driven in any sequence. The new brochures and guidebooks discussed previously in this chapter will illustrate and interpret the Scenic Road Network and will introduce the communities and attractions along the way. Trail blazing signage will mark the roads and will be coordinated with the signage for existing designated routes. A comprehensive system of interpretive waysides located at selected points along the roads will supplement the interpretation presented in the brochures and guidebooks and will help link the interpretation at related communities and attractions. A Phase 1 action for implementation of the heritage area will be to further refine the Scenic Road Network and to plan for its integrated interpretation.

Aside from the Primary Scenic Road Network, visitors will be encouraged to explore other local roads as well. High quality maps will show these roads, though they will not be signed or interpreted. This secondary system of roads will be for free exploration. They will be especially appealing for bicycling. New, designed bicycle routes will be planned similar to the existing Viewtrail 100.

Existing designated scenic roads on the Lower Eastern Shore that will be included in the Primary Scenic Road Network are outlined below.

**Beach to Bay Indian Trail** – Designated a National Recreation Trail by the National Park Service in 1993, this system of roads through Worcester and Somerset Counties follows paths that were instrumental in carrying trade between American Indians and early European settlers. It is also a Maryland Scenic Byway.



The Beach to Bay Indian Trail is a successful tour loop that connects many of the most significant sites in Somerset and Worcester Counties. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

The trail travels from Assateague Island National Seashore and Ocean City west across the Delmarva peninsula to Smith Island in the Chesapeake Bay. From the seashore, the trail follows Maryland Routes 611 and 376 to Berlin, then from Berlin to Snow Hill via Route 113. At Snow Hill, the trail forks. One branch goes to Princess Anne and the other goes to Pocomoke City, rejoining Maryland Route 667 to Crisfield and Smith Island (Map 3-A).

A brochure leads visitors to museums, parks, and nature trails across the region. The trail is well signed with attractive and colorful directional signs and, besides the brochure, interpreted by outdoor wayside signs installed at key locations. These waysides are models for other such installations mentioned throughout this plan.

**Maryland Scenic Byways** – Maryland Scenic Byways are promoted by the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Maryland Office of Tourism Development through a variety of means, including a special highway map and guidebook. Of the thirty-one routes designated so far, four are located in the Lower Eastern Shore. Although designation of additional scenic byway routes is not a certain or automatic process, the State Highway Administration may be willing to consider the designation of a few more routes. Once these routes are designated at the state level, their sponsors are eligible to compete for corridor management planning funds through the National Scenic Byway Program, as administered by the State Highway Administration. Once the route has an approved corridor management plan, sponsors are allowed to seek its designation as a National Scenic Byway. In addition to the Beach to Bay Indian Trail, the following routes are in this region:

**Chincoteague Bay Route** – The Chincoteague Bay Route is a 15-mile byway in Worcester County following Maryland Route 365 from Snow Hill to Public Landing on Chincoteague Bay, and from Snow Hill to the Virginia line on Maryland Route 12. There are two spurs to this byway, Taylor’s Landing Road and George Island Landing Road, each ending in public boat ramps.

**Old Ocean City Road** – The Old Ocean City Road is a 29-mile route that extends from Salisbury to Berlin via Maryland Route 346 and Berlin to West Ocean City on U.S. Route 50. Whaleyville is an attractive community along this corridor. Local sponsors of this road are seeking to obtain corridor management planning funds to begin the process of national designation for this route, as well as part of the Beach to Bay Indian Trail and the Chesapeake Country state byway. See the section below entitled “Potential National Scenic Byways.”

**Chesapeake Country** – The Chesapeake Country byway extends through all counties of the Eastern Shore except Worcester. The route begins in Cecil County and proceeds south through Kent, Queen Anne’s, Talbot, Caroline, and Dorchester Counties, and then enters Wicomico County on Route 313 in Sharptown. It follows Maryland Routes 313, 54, 347, 352, 362, 640, 413, and 667 into Crisfield and then to Smith Island, with a spur to Salisbury on Route 349 and to Deal Island and Wenona on Route 363. It runs through the towns of Hebron, Quantico, Whitehaven, Princess Anne, Widgeon, and Kingston.

**Viewtrail 100 Local Scenic Byway** – This nearly 100-mile long driving route established in Worcester County provides a circuit on two-lane, back-country roads. It also serves as a primary bike trail within the region.

As indicated on Map 5-A, Viewtrail 100 follows back roads from Pocomoke City to the shore of Chincoteague Bay through the community of Beaverdam. The route follows the shore from south to north through the communities of Stockton, Girdletree, Public Landing, and Basket Switch to Berlin. From Berlin, Viewtrail tracks southwest through Libertytown, Whiton, and Furnace Town, and then back to Pocomoke City.

The route traverses a representative sampling of the Lower Eastern Shore's landscape. While not a part of the Primary Scenic Road Network to be established by the heritage area, Viewtrail 100 is an excellent model for the creation of additional special back road tours for automobile and bicycle.

**Potential National Scenic Byways** – The Lower Eastern Shore has many routes that are good candidates for designation as National Scenic Byways. Such designation brings national publicity and access to a separate source of grant money from the National Scenic Byways Program. The process of designation proceeds through two important preliminary steps before nominating a route to the national program. First, the route must become a state scenic byway, by virtue of meeting certain standards. Second, its sponsors must undertake preparation of a corridor management plan to establish a plan to protect the scenic qualities of the route. Such plans typically examine such issues as design guidelines and the removal of old billboards, how to use signage to mark the route, safety, and marketing. The State of Maryland (using federal funds) provides 80 percent of the funding needed for these plans. Completion of a corridor management plan—useful in its own right—does not guarantee the success of a nomination for national status.



The Town of Willards is a quiet residential community located on Maryland Route 346, a potential National Scenic Byway in Wicomico County, east of Salisbury. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

One route in this region to be proposed for national designation would build on previously designated Maryland Scenic Byways in the region. It would incorporate

all of Old Ocean City Road (Maryland Route 346), part of the Beach to Bay Indian Trail, and part of the Chesapeake Country byway. It would revise two parts of those routes by including Pemberton Drive outside Salisbury and a loop through downtown Ocean City. This idea should be among the first steps to be implemented soon after certification of this heritage area.

Designation of other National Scenic Byways in the region should be studied and coordinated on a regional basis. In particular, it is important that corridor management plans be created for the region's scenic roads whether or not national designation is sought or granted. The use and implementation of corridor management plans by the state and counties will help assure that the character of the heritage area's roads and landscapes is not inadvertently compromised in future years.

Besides the roads currently incorporated into the Maryland Scenic Byways and Viewtrail 100, there are a number of other rural roads that provide pleasurable driving through scenic and historic areas of the Lower Eastern Shore and should be considered for designation and marketing. Notable among these are several state routes:

- **Route 12** – Salisbury to Snow Hill and from Snow Hill to the Virginia line in Wicomico and Worcester Counties;
- **Route 349** – Between Nanticoke and Waterview in Wicomico County;
- **Routes 350 and 374** – Mt. Hermon Road, parallel to U.S. Route 50 in Wicomico and Worcester Counties;
- **Route 361** – To Frenchtown and Rumbley in Somerset County;
- **Route 363** – On Deal Island in Somerset County; and
- **Routes 364 and 354** – Parallel to U.S. Route 113 in Worcester County.

All of these routes except Routes 354 and 364 will be included in the Primary Scenic Road Network to be established by the heritage area. Visitors will be invited to explore these routes, however, in the same way that they are encouraged to use Viewtrail 100.

## **Audio Tours**

Audio tours are a wonderful way of enhancing the driving experience for visitors to the heritage area. They allow the use of music, stories, poetry, and interviews with local people as well as narration. This mixture of sound and information can be as entertaining as the best radio and it enlivens a lengthy drive where stops are few.

The Maryland State Arts Council and Maryland Historical Trust are sponsoring the development of a series of Delmarva Cultural Audio Tours to introduce visitors,

and residents, to the ongoing and vibrant cultural life of the entire peninsula. Professionally produced audiotapes and compact disks explain the sites and sounds along identified driving routes. These audio tours are not written as a road-by-road tour that must be followed in a certain order. They are flexible in their sequencing and are heavily mapped, allowing visitors to use the tapes as much or as little as they want.

One currently sponsored audio tours pass through the Lower Eastern Shore and will be incorporated into the presentation of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. Additional, similar audio tours could be created by the heritage area. Among the topics addressed by the current tour are crab potting, soft crab shedding operations, the seafood workers' union, truck farming and canneries, charter fishing, the Pocomoke Forest, decoy carving, scrapple making, hog butchering, the African American community, and local festivals.

It also interprets ocean fishing, fish filleting, deep water pound netting, decoy carving, market gunning traditions, conservation conflicts, wild horses, sewing factories, railroading, old Ocean City hotels and boardwalk, lifeguarding traditions, charter fishing, fishing contests, hunting camps, segregation, decoys, the African American community, and selected artists. Communities through which the tour goes include Mardela Springs, Quantico, Whitehaven, Crisfield, Snow Hill, Salisbury, and Ocean City.

## **Guided Tours**

As the heritage area increases its marketing presence, the LESH and partners should work to make linkages between the sites even more a part of the fun of visiting the Lower Eastern Shore. Although audio tours like the one described above fulfill some of this need, guided tours are also a popular and effective means of linking sites across a region.

Currently, group tours arrive in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area escorted by outside tour operators. The manner in which these tours are run does not allow visitors to learn about the region, or understand the landscape between their destinations. Most visitors who travel to Smith Island, for instance, arrive in motorcoaches and never see the rest of Somerset County. Admittedly, getting visitors to the southern part of the Lower Eastern Shore is a challenge, because it takes two hours to get there from nearby metropolitan areas. When time for lunch and the trip back is factored in, there is not a great deal of free time left on the average day trip.

In the short term, step-on guides are often an effective first step in expanding visitors' experiences in the region. Although one tour company has offered a step-on service since 1993, the heritage area could support more of these operators. The LESH should work with county tourism experts to identify



individuals willing to act as step-on guides and market these services to outside tour operators.

One or more receptive tour operators are needed in this region to help expand local opportunities for visitors to enjoy such tours. These operators create and market customized tours for incoming groups. They take care of all the details, such as making arrangements with one or more step-on guides and experts to provide narration and working with interpretive sites to assure they are open. As their business grows, these entrepreneurs could begin to offer standard tours for individuals deciding to join at the spur of the moment, departing from the regional orientation and interpretive centers or selected interpretive attractions.

## **Recreational Linkages**

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area has a rich variety of opportunities to see the region from the unique perspective lent by travel on waterways, trails, and boardwalks. Although perhaps best known for beach recreation—with choices between a beach city and a natural island—the region provides numerous places for visitors to leave the beaten path, and the land altogether. Unique coastal bays and Chesapeake sounds offer saltwater adventures; and the region is blessed with a profusion of blackwater rivers (dark brown from the natural tannic acid of their wetland sources), tidal rivers, and tributary creeks (Map 3-A).

### **Boating**

The wealth of water access on the Lower Eastern Shore is a key competitive advantage of the heritage area, made even more special because of exceptional opportunities for viewing abundant wildlife.



A cruise boat heads across Tangier Sound to Ewell, on Smith Island. The island is home to a unique culture of watermen in Somerset County. [Photo by A. Elizabeth Watson]

Moreover, the Lower Eastern Shore offers some of the best opportunities for visitors to enjoy boating of any part of the peninsula. Unlike many other places, it is not necessary for visitors to bring their own boats. The impressive number of existing businesses offering boating experiences to visitors should be coordinated and marketed by the heritage area as special offering unique to the region. Here are a few of the existing opportunities for visitors to enjoy boating currently provided by local businesses within in the region:

### **Concessions**

**Canoes** – A canoe concession could be created on the Pocomoke River, based in Snow Hill and at Pocomoke River State Park and Forest.

**Kayaks** – At Assateague Island National Seashore, a kayak concession could provide visitors with another way to experience Chincoteague Bay.

### **Outfitters**

**Sea Kayaks** – An outfitter in Ocean City could serve visitors paddling on Assawoman Bay and the other upper coastal bays.

**Jetskis** – The same outfitter could also serve jetski users.

**Small Boats** – Many businesses in Ocean City offer small boats for fishing, clamming, and crabbing within the coastal bay system. In Salisbury, a major outfitter could be established to provide equipment for small boats, canoes, and kayaks, and could also sponsor guided trips.

### **Charters**

**Sailboats** – Sailboat charters could be operated on Chincoteague Bay.

**Fishing Boats** – Charters for deep sea fishing boats already serve visitors in Ocean City, and fishing expeditions are available in Crisfield. In the future, a guide or owner based in Salisbury could meet visitors at variety of landings and take them fishing.

**Other Boats** – Numerous charter boats regularly depart from Deal Island and Crisfield.

### **Cruises**

**Kayaks** – From Shantytown Village, visitors could participate in a kayak cruise on Trappe Creek. Kayak tours to Janes Island may also be available in Crisfield.

**Chesapeake Bay** – Cruises to Smith and Tangier Islands are already available from Crisfield, but their operation could potentially be expanded. In addition, regular passenger vessels shuttling Smith Islanders and their goods could allow visitors to hop aboard for a modest fee.

**Ecotour Excursions** – In the future, there may be increased visitor demand

for excursions departing from Ocean City and Crisfield. Excursions from Ocean City may be able to take visitors to Assateague Island.

## **Ferries**

**Wicomico River** – Two automobile ferries are currently operating on the Wicomico River: One at secluded Upper Ferry, the other more well known at Whitehaven. Both are among the oldest in the nation. These ferries allow visitors to see the river traffic between Salisbury and the Chesapeake Bay.

## **Private Boats**

**Powerboats** – Many local residents own their own powerboats, and it is one of the area’s most popular recreational activities. For visitors, though, the only way to use this form of transportation is to bring their own boat.

## **Water Trails and Access Points**

The region’s waterways are already recognized assets and a unique way for adventurers to enjoy the region’s landscape. In addition to the organized boating experiences noted above, many visitors to the Lower Eastern Shore bring their own boats and use the many public water access points to explore the region’s waterways. Visitors who bring their own boats for recreational experiences are



Water access is an important feature of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. Public boat ramps such as this one on the Pocomoke River in Worcester County are plentiful. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

a niche market that can be aggressively addressed by the heritage area. Moving roughly from east to west, the wealth of existing waterways include:

**Chincoteague Bay** – The bay has marked water trails for light boats able to get up close to the Assateague Island marshes. Public boat access for trailered boats is available at Public Landing, George’s Landing, and Taylor’s Landing. Landings on other waterways are plentiful and well maintained.

**Pocomoke River** – This river is a state scenic river with a popular “inn to inn” canoe trail and guide sponsored by local bed and breakfasts.

**Wicomico River** – The upper reach of this river forms the heart of a greenway running through the center of Salisbury. The river is accessible from marinas in downtown Salisbury and off Riverside Drive Extended.

**Nanticoke River** – The Nanticoke River is accessible from Sharptown’s waterfront park, Cedar Hill Park in Bivalve, Nanticoke Harbor, and Wetipquin Creek. Like the Pocomoke, this river rises in Delaware, but is even larger, offering superb opportunities upstream to visit forested wetlands. It is among the cleanest of the generally clean streams of the region.

**Barren Creek** – Tiny Barren Creek in Mardela Springs is the scene each year of a popular canoe and kayak race to the Nanticoke River and on to the annual Shad Fest in Vienna.

**Janes Island State Park** – This park outside Crisfield features more than 30 miles of marked water trails that meander through 2,900 acres of creeks and marshes. Although Janes Island itself is accessible only by boat, part of the state park is on the mainland.

**Tangier Sound** – The sound is an easy 15-mile crossing to Smith Island for the more intrepid of sea kayakers seeking the luxury of camping in remote areas. It is also possible to ferry sea kayaks across to the island on the roof of one of the passenger or freight vessels on their regular runs.

**Pocomoke Sound** – This is a gentle and remote boating area, like other areas of the Chesapeake Bay side of the region ringed with green state wildlife or natural resource management areas.

### **Trails, Greenways, and Bicycling**

The Lower Eastern Shore provides many fine opportunities for bicycling, hiking, and walking. The area is already well known to bicyclists, who find the scenic, quiet, and level backcountry roads a pleasure to travel. Hiking opportunities abound, although most trails are short and fragmented, owing in part to the wealth of waterways described above. Walks along the inimitable Ocean City boardwalk and the beaches in Ocean City and on Assateague Island, of course, are a necessary part of any visit. Birders frequently make use of these trails as well.

The plan for the heritage area envisions incorporating existing trails and greenways into the offerings marketed to visitors. With leadership from localities and the three counties, existing trails and greenways should be extended and connected where feasible. New trails and greenways should be created to benefit local residents and to offer new opportunities for visitors. These initiatives should be supported and facilitated by the heritage area. Special opportunities important to the heritage area and its attractions, such as development of the Salisbury Urban Greenway with the Salisbury Crescent, a proposed target investment area, will be supported by the heritage area in partnership with the counties, communities, and attractions.

Bicycle trails and events are a popular offering of the Lower Eastern Shore region. Bicycling is prominently featured in the Lower Eastern Shore's current brochure of the region. With respect to existing bicycling events, the Seagull Century and the Watermelon Ride are successful bicycling events that attract a significant number of bicyclists each year. The Seagull Century event is held each October. In 2001, its 7,000 participants reached the limit of bicyclists that could be accommodated. The event has had a significant effect upon the local economy.

A comprehensive network of bicycle tour routes will be established and marketed by the heritage area as an easy way to promote visitation to the region. The bicycle network will identify existing tour routes and create new ones as well. Existing visitor services directly associated with bicycling will be identified, coordinated, and included in marketing materials. New potential business opportunities associated with this niche market will be identified to potential entrepreneurs. Existing bicycling and walking trails include the following, which are listed in order from the most accessible and developed to the most undeveloped and natural:

**Viewtrail 100** – As discussed above under scenic roads, Viewtrail is a 100-mile-long trail route that provides a circuit through Worcester County on two-lane, backcountry roads. This trail is currently promoted by the county and the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee. It is difficult to determine how many people are using this trail, but the number estimated is in the hundreds. The trail has had a notable effect on the village of Stockton. With only one store in town, results are easy to gauge, and the owners know that they are seeing bicycle traffic. One thing is certain, they say: having a working bathroom is a sure way to gain the business of bicyclists on the trail.

**Snow Hill Rail-Trail** – A short, one-half-mile section between Belt and Church Streets in Snow Hill represents the beginning of a trail that may later be extended.

**Salisbury Urban Greenway** – The Salisbury Urban Greenway is a three-mile-long greenway along the upper Wicomico River from the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art to Pemberton Historical Park. Trails are found within the Salisbury Zoo at the upper end and along the waterfront at the foot of Main Street. The city plans to connect these segments with a continuous walking trail throughout the greenway, ultimately to extend it to Pemberton Historical Park, downstream from the city. This greenway would connect all of the sites in the Salisbury Crescent, one of the areas being proposed for designation as a Target Investment Area. The Ward Museum, which is located within the Salisbury Crescent, will serve as the heritage area’s first Regional Interpretive Center.

**Pemberton Historical Park** – At Pemberton Historical Park is a 4.5-mile walking trail that extends around the property. This walking trail will be linked with the Salisbury Urban Greenway which is currently being developed.

**Pocomoke River State Forest and Park** – This important park and open space located in the southeastern portion of the heritage area has a hiking trail system, including the self-guided Pusey Branch Nature Trail.

**Paul Leifer Nature Trail** – Furnace Town provides access to a one-mile trail along Nassawango Creek and through Nassawango Swamp.

**Assateague Island State Park and National Seashore** – Nature trails cross through dunes, forest, and marsh areas of Assateague Island. Technically, at 3,000 acres combined, the National Seashore and National Wildlife Refuge (on the portion of the island in Virginia) could qualify as a wilderness area. The southern end of the segment of the island located in Maryland is remote and accessible on foot only.



Bikers make their way down Assateague Island in Worcester County. The flat land, country roads, and frequent water crossings make biking popular in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Chesapeake Forest Lands** – These lands are located throughout the Eastern Shore of Maryland (from Kent County south to Worcester County), and in southern Delaware. They represent most of the former landholdings of the Chesapeake Forest Products Company, and were transferred to public ownership in 1999 and 2000. Within the Lower Eastern Shore, there are 45,974 acres of these lands.

The potential for additional recreational trails and greenways in the region is considerable and will be explored by the heritage area in partnership with the three counties and local communities. Two developments may be particularly beneficial for bicycling:

**Snow Hill-to-Berlin Rail Trail** – One potential trail identified in the preparation of this heritage area plan would be to create a “rail with trail” along the short-haul railroad that runs between Berlin and Snow Hill, serving a large lumber manufacturing plant in Snow Hill. South of this point is the Snow Hill Rail-Trail. The active portion of the line described here is further mentioned in the section below on public transit. Although rare, such trails do exist around the country, and the national Rails to Trails Conservancy provides advice on design and liability issues.

**Wicomico County Greenways Plan** – The recently completed Wicomico County Greenways plan is a model that could eventually result in a multi-county system of specially designated bicycle routes.

## **Boardwalks**

A number of communities within the Lower Eastern Shore feature boardwalks for pedestrians and bicyclists. Although the Ocean City boardwalk is the most recognizable one in the region, boardwalks in other communities offer opportunities to experience waterways and wetlands. The heritage area should work to enhance existing boardwalks and develop additional ones.

**Ocean City** – Ocean City currently has two miles of oceanfront boardwalk, and has plans to extend it around the Ocean City Inlet toward the bayside. This well-known boardwalk is the central feature of the city’s visitor experience. It extends through an area that is proposed for designation as a Target Investment Area.

**Cypress Park Nature Trail** – At Cypress Park in Pocomoke City, a boardwalk extends through the cypress swamp located along Pocomoke River. The park and boardwalk will be associated with the development of the Target Investment Area to be established in Pocomoke.

**Snow Hill** – Snow Hill recently undertook construction of the Sturgis Memorial Gateway, a new park with a gazebo and boardwalk above the town’s bridge crossing of the Pocomoke River. This new park is the upstream end of a planned boardwalk stretching well over a mile down to Byrd Park. It will include the present park (where “dancing under the stars” is offered every weekend) just below the bridge and the rear portion of the public property where the Julia Purnell Museum is located.

**Salisbury (Proposed)** – Pemberton Historical Park and Adkins Mill Pond both have short nature trail boardwalks, and the Ward Museum plans a boardwalk around Schumaker Pond at the upper end of the Salisbury Greenway. As noted previously, the Salisbury Urban Greenway is located within the Salisbury Crescent, which contains three areas proposed for designation as a single Target Investment Area.

## **Walking Tours**

Walking tours can be created using a variety of techniques. Self-guided walking tours using published brochures are the most common. A system of interpretive waysides, wall plaques, and exhibits can also be used within a community for more comprehensive and engaging self-guided interpretation. Guided tours can be offered on a regular schedule or as special events. Ghost walks in the evening have been a popular offering for visitors where overnight accommodations are available. Carriages and historic vehicles are used by some communities to supplement or replace walking tours. Some of these offerings can be commercially rewarding. Whatever means are used, however, it is important that a level of authenticity and quality be maintained.

Several towns and cities in the region have created walking tours with accompanying interpretive brochures. These include Berlin, Crisfield, Ocean City, Princess Anne, Salisbury (Downtown and Newtown), and Snow Hill. Walking tours are a key means for communities to interpret themselves and will be a key interpretive feature for communities with Local Visitor Information Centers.

The heritage area will develop partnerships with local communities for the coordinated interpretation of Lower Eastern Shore towns and villages. Design guidelines for brochures will be created using the Lower Eastern Shore branding so that walking tours in different communities will have a coordinated look and quality, enhancing their presentation. Signage guidelines, discussed above, will provide standards for interpretive signage. Interpretation will be based upon the heritage area themes and linked to nearby attractions and the Scenic Road Network.



Participation in the heritage area system will be voluntary. Funding for implementation will be shared between the communities and the heritage area.

## **Public Transit**

Automobiles currently provide the only reliable transportation between many communities and sites in on the Lower Eastern Shore. Although other forms of transportation are available to visitors, they do not presently function as effective links on a regional basis.

Locally, Ocean City has an excellent bus system. In 2001, that system was enhanced with a summer-season shuttle to and from a new parking lot in West Ocean City. Somerset County has a transit system in place through which buses, vans, and cars can be used to travel anywhere in the county.



The Ocean City Transit Center in Worcester County enhances the architectural character of the downtown area and serves visitors from a convenient location near the boardwalk. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

To assist in coordinating the transportation needs in the three counties of the Lower Eastern Shore, a Regional Transportation Master Planning Project is currently underway. When the goals of this plan are implemented, the three counties will take a more cooperative approach to solving regional transportation problems. Following that plan, a Tri-County Transit system began operation in 2001. A transportation hub may also be constructed in Salisbury.

Although transportation systems designed for local residents can often serve visitors as well, it is important to tailor a few of these systems to meet their needs more directly. In recent years, many proposals have been put forward to address this issue. The region already recognizes that visitors are more receptive to transportation systems when the experience is entertaining as well as functional. Ocean City has declared a policy of “making transit fun,” and it appears to have

succeeded. Midnight rides on the city's many buses are at a premium, as riders scramble to make last use of their "all day for a dollar" tickets.

If the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is susceptible to any problems stimulated by tourism, it will be caused by too many automobiles on the roads and in the scarce parking lots of the region's small towns. If these towns begin to plan for shuttles and trolleys, it will help them to stay ahead of the demand caused by increasing visitation.

### **Somerset County**

At the present time, the Chesapeake Bay town of Crisfield is accessible to most visitors only by road. Although regular ferries are operated between Crisfield and Smith Island, Tangier Island, and Southern Maryland, they are not promoted or organized in a comprehensive way. If a more comprehensive system of ferries were developed, visitors could experience the region the way it used to be seen, from the water. This system could link the many interesting necks of land within a short distance of Crisfield, and help visitors to rediscover the historic connections between communities along the Chesapeake Bay waterfront. For many years, the possibility of operating a more direct ferry between Crisfield and the western shore of Maryland has also been discussed.

### **Wicomico County**

A system of shuttle buses or vans would allow visitors to more easily navigate between three of the most important sites in the Salisbury area: the Ward Museum, Downtown Salisbury, and Pemberton Historical Park. While each of these sites is located within the "Salisbury Crescent" adjacent to the Wicomico River, the roads between them are sometimes difficult for visitors to negotiate.

### **Worcester County**

There is a railroad between Berlin and Snow Hill, and a river between Snow Hill and Pocomoke City. The three cities are beginning to explore the idea of a multi-modal system of moving visitors from Ocean City, first by rubber-wheeled "trolley" (the kind tourists have come to expect in popular destinations) to Berlin, then by train to Snow Hill, and then by boat to Pocomoke City. A return trip completely by trolley would be the finale. The proposed train line could also be outfitted with a bicycle trail alongside, and the trolley shuttling back and forth to Snow Hill could substitute for the train when the line is needed by its owners. The boat could do triple duty as a shuttle between the proposed Pocomoke River Discovery Center in Pocomoke City, an adjunct environmental learning space in Snow Hill (both sites are on the water), and as a "floating classroom" during the school year for local and visiting school groups.

## Summary of Actions

The actions listed below are prioritized by phase in Chapter 9 (Implementation). Chapter 9 also addresses the roles of the different organizations and communities responsible for implementing these actions.

### Visitor Orientation and Wayfinding

- 3.1 Orientation and Wayfinding Network** – Create an integrated network for the orientation of visitors and the linkage of sites, attractions, communities, and resources. Key components of this network will include 1) Welcome Centers, 2) Regional Interpretive Centers, 3) County and Local Visitor Information Centers, and 4) a wayfinding system that highlights the region’s Scenic Road Network and other important routes.

### Welcome Center and Visitor Information Centers

- 3.2 Heritage Area Orientation** – Incorporate the existing Welcome Center and County Visitor Information Centers into the orientation network for the heritage area. Information presented at these centers should be oriented toward presenting the heritage area and directing visitors to Regional Information Centers and attractions.
- 3.3 Interpretive Exhibits** – Install a major exhibit in each center introducing the heritage area. Include a limited amount of information on interpretive themes. Display heritage area literature and brochures in a special fashion.
- 3.4 Hospitality Training** – Train staff to speak knowledgeably about the heritage area and its attractions.
- 3.5 Route 113 Visitor Information Center** – Support partners in planning and implementing establishment of a Visitor Information Center on Route 113 near the Delaware state line.
- 3.6 Route 50 Visitor Information Center** – Support partners in planning and implementing establishment of a Visitor Information Center on Route 50 at the western end of the heritage area near the Maryland state line.
- 3.7 Local Visitor Information Centers** – Work with the heritage area’s historic communities on interpretation and on the establishment of Local Visitor Information Centers. The first step in interpretation could be installation of information signs or kiosks. Coordinate, facilitate, support, and provide funding strategies for these centers, especially as it relates to natural, cultural, and historical interpretation.

### **Regional Interpretive Centers**

- 3.8 Network of Regional Interpretive Centers** – Establish a network of Regional Interpretive Centers to introduce visitors to the themes of the heritage area and to link with the interpretation at sites, attractions, and communities. Regional Interpretive Centers are planned for the Ward Museum in Salisbury, the older portion of the boardwalk in Ocean City, and the Pocomoke River Discovery Center in Pocomoke City.
- 3.9 Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, Salisbury** – Establish the first Regional Interpretive Center at the Ward Museum. Include an interior exhibit featuring the themes of the heritage area. Include interpretation and information in the new exterior exhibit currently being planned.
- 3.10 Ocean City Kiosk** – Install a heritage area kiosk in Ocean City as the first step toward attracting visitors and establishing a Regional Interpretive Center in the city.
- 3.11 Pocomoke City Kiosk** – Install a heritage area kiosk in Pocomoke City as the first step toward attracting visitors and establishing a Regional Interpretive Center at the Pocomoke River Discovery Center.
- 3.12 Ocean City Regional Interpretive Center** – Begin discussions and planning for a Regional Interpretive Center in Ocean City with local, regional, and state partners. Planning should be a central component of the city’s designation as a Target Investment Area.
- 3.13 Pocomoke City Regional Interpretive Center** – Begin discussions and planning for a Regional Interpretive Center at the Pocomoke River Discovery Center with local, regional, and state partners. Planning should be a central component of Pocomoke City’s designation as a Target Investment Area.

### **Signage System**

- 3.14 Signage Design Guidelines** – Following the establishment of standards for branding and graphic identification, develop a comprehensive set of design guidelines for signage throughout the heritage area. Design guidelines should establish sign types, sizes, graphic standards, fabrication standards, and standards for use.
- 3.15 Adopt and Implement Sign Standards** – Work with the three counties and the state on adoption of the approved signage design guidelines throughout the heritage area.

- 3.16 **Gateway Signs** – Install gateway signs at the major vehicular entrances to the heritage area.
- 3.17 **Sign Implementation** – Develop a plan for the phased implementation of signage throughout the heritage area.

### **Publications**

- 3.18 **Heritage Area Brochure** – Publish a new heritage area brochure to present the heritage area, its network for regional orientation and interpretation, and key partnering attractions and communities. All new publications should use the branding and graphic identity established for the heritage area.
- 3.19 **Coordination of Existing Publications** – Assess the array of existing brochures and publications in the three-county region. Integrate existing publications into a system that promotes the region as a whole. All new publications should use the branding and graphic identity established for the heritage area. In turn, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area identity should be consistent with the state-wide heritage identity being developed by the state.
- 3.20 **New Brochures** – Begin developing a plan for the creation of new brochures focusing on attractions and experiences not yet promoted. A core system of heritage area brochures should be established (see action 3.19, above). The development of new brochures and publications will be an ongoing activity. All new publications should use the branding and graphic identity established for the heritage area.
- 3.21 **Heritage Area Guidebook** – Publish a regional guidebook to present the history and resources of the region in more detail than is possible in brochure format.
- 3.22 **Tear Sheet Maps** – Produce a tear sheet map of the heritage area for distribution to hotels, restaurants, businesses, and others.

### **Scenic Road Network**

- 3.23 **Scenic Road Network** – Work with the three counties to designate a Scenic Road Network for the heritage area to be used as the primary means to physically and interpretively link attractions, communities, and resources. This network appears on a map in the appendix to this plan.

- 3.24 Scenic Road Interpretation** – Develop interpretive strategies that include the interpretation of the Scenic Road Network through publications and interpretive signage.
- 3.25 Scenic Road Signage** – Develop a plan for the signage of the Scenic Road Network. This plan must coordinate the heritage area network with state and national designations.
- 3.26 Local Scenic Roads** – Publish maps that show other local scenic roads for use by visitors who wish to explore the region. Develop local tours for auto and bicycle on these local roads similar to Viewtrail 100.
- 3.27 Maryland and National Scenic Byways** – Implement a plan for designation of additional Maryland and national scenic byways within the heritage area. The roads proposed for designation should largely coincide with the heritage area’s Scenic Road Network.
- 3.28 Corridor Management Plan** – Undertake a corridor management plan should be developed for the heritage area’s Scenic Road Network. This corridor management plan should meet state and national requirements for scenic road designation, but should be prepared for the heritage area’s designated system regardless of which portions of it are submitted for state and national designation. The plan can be adjusted for state and national purposes. The corridor management plan must be a full partnership of the three counties and the heritage area.

### **Audio Tours**

- 3.29 Audio Tours** – Cooperate with and promote the auto tour created by the Maryland State Arts Council and the Maryland Historical Trust. Create new audio tours based on this model.

### **Guided Tours**

- 3.30 Step-On Guided Tours** – In partnership with county tourism experts, create and market a step-on guide program geared toward the motorcoach industry.
- 3.31 Receptive Tour Operators** – In partnership with local tourism experts, encourage and support the development of receptive tour operators specifically tailored to the Lower Eastern Shore. These businesses should serve conferences and events as well as tour groups.

### **Waterways**

- 3.32 Coordinate and Promote Water Activities** – Promote water-oriented activities as a central part of the Lower Eastern Shore experience.
- 3.33 Expand Water Trails** – Designated water trails for visitors to explore and enjoy with their own boats should be expanded and new tours created, similar to bicycle trails. The water trails should be coordinated with the availability of local services to support the needs of visitors using the tours. Water trails are currently designed for hand-carried boats, but power boat tours of the Pocomoke River and Tangier Sound may be of interest.
- 3.34 Assistance to Small Businesses** – The heritage area should encourage and support the creation and development of small businesses that provide water activity services. This topic is also addressed in Chapter 5 (Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services).

### **Bicycle Trails, Pedestrian Trails, and Greenways**

- 3.35 Coordinate and Promote Bicycle Tours and Events** – The significant opportunities for bicycle tours and events should be coordinated and marketed by the heritage area and its partners as a central part of the Lower Eastern Shore experience.
- 3.36 Create New Bicycle Trail Routes** – New bicycle trails should be created throughout the heritage area similar to Viewtrail 100. The bicycle trails should be coordinated into a single publications and marketing effort. Over time, organize the marketing and publications for these trails into a single, regional program.
- 3.37 Create and Interconnect Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails** – Support the creation, extension, and interconnection of bicycle and pedestrian trails throughout the region.

### **Boardwalks**

- 3.38 Support Creation of New Boardwalks** – Support the creation of new boardwalks by communities and attractions as a way to experience the heritage area landscape. Support interconnection of boardwalks with bicycle and pedestrian trails.

### **Walking Tours**

- 3.39 Encourage Community Interpretation** – Encourage the development of community interpretation as an integral part of the heritage area. Use heritage area themes, publications, and signage to accomplish this goal. Link community interpretation to interpretation of attractions and scenic roads. Walking tours will be a significant component of community interpretation.
- 3.40 Graphic and Interpretive Standards** – Require communities to use heritage area graphic and interpretive standards for their walking tours in order to participate in the heritage area program. Assist communities by coordinating funding opportunities and technical assistance.

### **Public Transit**

- 3.41 Public Transit** – Support community initiatives for public transit. Explore possibilities for making public transit an integral part of the visitor experience in appropriate locations.



## Chapter 4 **Interpretation and Education**

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Furnace Town, near Snow Hill, Worcester County

## Chapter 4

# Interpretation and Education

### Introduction

The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) requires that heritage area management plans answer the following questions about interpretation. As stated in the MHAA guidelines:

**Core Themes** – “What are the strongest threads or core themes to understanding the importance of the heritage area’s people, places and events?”

**Resources and Programs** – “What are the resources and programs presently available to residents and visitors to tell these stories?”

**Authenticity and Continuity** – “What are the key issues in strengthening or maintaining authenticity and continuity in interpretation?”

Interpretation and linkages are what drive this plan. All other actions in this document are designed to support the interpretive strategy discussed here. This chapter meets MHAA’s requirement for interpretation by setting forth a strategy that will enable the LESHCA and its partners explain the meaning, context, and interconnectedness of the heritage of the Lower Eastern Shore. This heritage relates to a wide range of natural, historic, and cultural resources, as well as cultural traditions.

### What Is Interpretation?

Interpretation is the means of bringing the heritage of the Lower Eastern Shore alive for residents and visitors through compelling presentation. Interpretation conveys the meaning of a site and its stories, rather than simply facts, and uses all of the senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. At its best, interpretation is a form of education that provides both enjoyable and entertaining learning opportunities.

Interpreters begin their work by determining what the basic ideas they want visitors to understand and remember in relation to “interpretive resources”: sites, events, tours, and programs. These ideas are known as themes, or thematic statements. Thematic topics for the Lower Eastern Shore are suggested later in this chapter. The full development of thematic statements, however, is beyond

the scope of this management plan. To convey the concepts and stories related to these themes, interpreters employ media such as exhibits, brochures and guidebooks, and docent scripts. The goal is to ensure that visitors do not leave an interpretive site without gaining an understanding of the heritage area themes.

An example of a thematic topic is: “Lifelines and Livelihoods: Commerce, Productivity, and Transportation on the Lower Eastern Shore.” Here is an example of a thematic statement drawn from this topic:

“From American Indian pathways to historical means of movement around the region on rivers, rails, and roads, transportation enabled the residents of the Lower Eastern Shore to prosper through commerce. From the seventeenth century on, the bounty of the lands, waters, and forests in this region did more than provide food and shelter. This bounty also provided the basis for wealth for both landowners and townspeople.”

To make use of this theme in a regional interpretive strategy, an interpretive site such as Pemberton Historical Park would provide a brief explanation about this regional theme (and others) as a context for its interpretation. The site would then draw on the theme to identify and develop individual stories through a variety of media.

Interpretation is based on facts, but it is more than a simple recitation of facts. At Pemberton Historical Park, for example, it is not enough to tell visitors that archeologists have discovered the second oldest colonial wharf in North America. Certainly this is an interesting fact, but how much more interesting it would be explain its significance through the story of Isaac Handy, a local merchant. Visitors could be told of Isaac Handy’s reliance on this wharf to ship his goods back to England and travel to and from Salisbury on business.



Pemberton Historical Park near Salisbury, Wicomico County, provides visitors with a rare opportunity to experience eighteenth-century plantation life on the Eastern Shore. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

As visitors look over the water and see the barges on the Wicomico River, the story of Isaac Handy would remind them about the variety of ships and boats that passed by the wharf in the eighteenth century. An outdoor interpretive sign might convey these ideas, or perhaps even a costumed interpreter using “first person” techniques to converse with visitors as Handy himself. No matter how simple or elaborate, interpretation aims at conveying just a few “big ideas.” What the visitor retains from a visit to Pemberton might simply be that the colonists relied on water to move around the region.

Regional interpretation seeks to link multiple sites with one or more themes. From the simple story told at Pemberton, for example, the visitor begins to see the small streams and rivers meandering through such places as Snow Hill and Princess Anne in an entirely new light. A visitor might also build on this knowledge when touring other sites. At Furnace Town, for example, a visitor might be led to ask, “How was bog iron brought to the furnace?” and “How was the iron shipped to market?”

## **Formulating an Interpretive Strategy**

Of all of the “regional planning” concepts discussed in this plan, interpretation is what makes heritage area planning different from other types of planning. It directs the development of interpretive sites, tours, events, and other programs and the creation of linkages among all of these. Interpretation also helps to ask new questions and stimulate innovation in urban design and community development. Moreover, it is central to the linkages discussed in Chapter 3 (Orientation and Linkages) and the visitor experience addressed in Chapter 5 (Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services). And finally, it can make an entire region an attraction, a sum that is greater than its parts.

The preservation, development, and interpretation of “interpretive sites” (historic and natural sites and various kinds of museums) are often stimulated by the needs of individual sites and committed individuals and groups. At some point in the development of such sites, however, it is helpful to step back and ask the question, “What stories should we tell across the entire region?” This kind of systematic examination of a region’s interpretation can reveal gaps and overlaps and opportunities based on both of these. Such analysis can lead to efforts to differentiate interpretation at various sites, or it can inspire the creation of new sites or events celebrating essential aspects of a region’s history or natural resources that have gone uninterpreted. Overall, this systematic approach allows the development of a regional interpretive strategy, and ultimately a set of interpretive strategies to be shared by all sites, communities, and events that can be involved in its development.

The process of creating the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area’s interpretive strategy began with:

- **Existing Conditions** – A review of existing conditions and interpretive issues across the region;
- **Heritage Resources** – Tours and an examination of heritage resources; and
- **Interpretive Themes** – A review of existing interpretive themes.

Below are findings with regard to existing conditions, recommended thematic topics, and an interpretive strategy that includes ideas for the region’s existing and potential interpretive sites. A synopsis of interpretive sites is provided in Tables 4.2a-d. In addition to these interpretive sites, the landscape, the communities, and many heritage events provide opportunities for interpretation within a regional approach.

## **Findings**

The findings below describe existing conditions and identify opportunities and challenges to be addressed in the interpretive strategy. To the extent that these findings describe problems, actions discussed later in this chapter propose solutions. Overall, the foundation that exists for a regional interpretive system is commendably well-developed, even surprisingly so for a region with such a modest population. The richness of the interpretation that already exists is a strong indicator of community support for heritage development.

**Visitor Access to Interpretive Sites** – Only a few sites are available for visitation year-round. Fortunately, however, those that are open most are situated in a convenient circulation pattern. A number of walking, driving, and bicycle tours are also available. Most interpretive sites in the heritage area, however, are only open a few hours per week, or open by appointment only. This lack of access is a major contributing factor to the small number of visitors that most sites experience.

**Coverage of Interpretive Topics** – Existing interpretive sites in the region interpret natural, cultural, and historical topics, spanning a timeframe from colonial times to the present. Cultural topics include both traditions and modern visual and performing arts. It appears that there is a natural “fit” among existing sites with likely thematic topics. Apparent gaps are already addressed by proposed sites, with the exception of:

**Military and Naval Heritage** – Although this theme is important to the region’s history, it has not been presented to the public to the extent that it

could be. The region played a role in several wars including the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War.

**Prehistory** – The history of American Indians in the region is still present in the cultures of the tribes that live in the region today. Archeologists and historians have also studied these cultures to a greater degree than the public realizes, because the findings of this research have seldom been conveyed through interpretation. A few museums, such as the Accohannock Museum in Marion, Somerset County, are a notable exception to this rule.

**Agriculture** – Agriculture is an important aspect of the region’s landscape and heritage, and was especially instrumental in its population growth in the nineteenth century. The importance of this topic is evidenced by the growing interest in agricultural land preservation, which is described in Chapter 7 (Stewardship).

**Interpretive Presentation** – The level of professional involvement in interpretation varies widely. Several sites offer an outstanding level of expertise. All show admirable enthusiasm and dedication and seem to have made the most of available resources and apparent stories. Even the Mt. Zion Schoolhouse in Snow Hill, Worcester County, which is open only a few hours a week, offers an excellent experience thanks to devoted volunteers and docents.

**Community Support** – The number and range of existing interpretive sites is a strong indicator of community interest in their preservation and interpretation. Difficulty in maintaining public accessibility to existing sites and creating more interpretive opportunities is a matter of resources, not a lack of community support. Despite the fact that the largest town in the region is Salisbury, with a metropolitan population of 40,000, these rural communities have done an outstanding job of creating a foundation for an strong interpretive system. The village of Allen, located on the Wicomico Creek in Wicomico County, is one such example. Since its founding in 1996, the Allen Historical Society has helped to underscore the history of the village, including the “free blacks” who settled here and built one of the area’s first African-American churches.

**Events** – The number of events such as fairs, parades, festivals, and celebrations that are offered by communities in this region is commendably out of proportion to its small population. Several events, such as Crisfield’s Crab Derby, the Hebron Firemen’s Carnival, and the Sharptown Carnival, rank as cultural treasures in their own right. Interpretation at events varies widely, but because so many are already established, the opportunity for interpretive outreach through events is considerable.

**Regional Orientation** – Currently, visitors have no specific destination where they can go to learn about the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area’s history,

nature, culture, and geography. The existing State Welcome Center and County Visitor Information Centers on U.S. Route 13 provide necessary visitor services, but they do not yet play a role in regional interpretation.

In 2000, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland, was designated the regional interpretive hub for the entire Eastern Shore, under a joint initiative of the National Park Service and other parties to the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. This initiative is called the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. Although the Maritime Museum is not located within the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, its interpretive mission extends southward to include this region. As a point of contact for the entire Chesapeake Bay area, the museum will provide orientation information on behalf of the Lower Eastern Shore. It is important to note, however, that the Gateways Network does not cover that portion of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area that drains to the coastal bays and to the Atlantic Ocean.

In addition to the Maritime Museum, another site near the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area plays a formal role in the Gateways Network. The Sailwinds Visitor Information Center in Cambridge, the county seat of neighboring Dorchester County, has been designated one of the network's regional information centers. Although the purpose of these centers is similar to that proposed for the Regional Interpretive Centers in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, they are focused on the bay as a whole, and not specifically on the heritage area.

**Existing Regional Interpretation** – Regional interpretation to date includes:

**LESHC Brochures** – The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee has produced several brochures.

**Beach to Bay Indian Trail** – This route has been designated a National Recreational Trail and state scenic byway.

**State Scenic Byways** – In addition to the Beach to Bay Indian Trail, three state scenic byways have been established within the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area: the Chincoteague Bay Route, Old Ocean City Road, and Chesapeake Country. These driving routes are further described in Chapter 3 (Orientation and Linkages).

**New Regional Interpretation** – The Old Ocean City Road state scenic byway forms the heart of a recent proposal to recognize an additional section of the byway and nominate the new route as a National Scenic Byway. Interpretation would be a part of the corridor planning that precedes the actual nomination. The proposal awaits state and federal funding. Another project involves the Maryland Arts Council and the Maryland Historical Trust, which are producing

a set of audio tours that introduce visitors to the living traditions of the Eastern Shore. One tour passes through the Lower Eastern Shore, as described in Chapter 3 (Orientation and Linkages). Between existing regional interpretation and these initiatives, the most obvious regional interpretive opportunities have already been addressed.

**New Interpretive Sites** – The large number of possibilities for new sites identified by partners during the planning process is striking. Quite a few are already under development. Taken together, they could substantially enrich the region’s ability to tell its stories. On the other hand, the number raises a concern about the ability of the region to support still more sites.

**Interpretive Development Associated with Recreation** – The region has considerable potential to appeal to visitors with an interest in natural areas, agricultural landscapes, and water recreation. Few recreational experiences in the region incorporate interpretation, but the opportunity is great. The extensive acreage of state-owned natural areas and forests suggests the opportunity for state collaboration, even though these sites are not specifically identified as interpretive resources for the purposes of this plan. Successful examples of initiatives that combine recreation with interpretation include ecotourism operations in Ocean City, at Assateague Island, and elsewhere. In addition, there are water trails on the Pocomoke River and at Janes Island State Park.



Watermen in Wenona Harbor, Somerset County, have departed this harbor for the waters of Tangier Sound since the early days of European settlement. [Photo by A. Elizabeth Watson]

**Research and Support for Maintaining Cultural Traditions** – Though well-recognized, the rich and living cultural traditions of the Lower Eastern Shore are only modestly tapped for interpretation. These include the dialects, stories, trades, arts and crafts, music, foods, and other aspects of unique lifestyles that evolved in this region. Possible topics include water and waterfowl, Smith Island, minority populations, and early European settlement. Knowledge about cultural traditions in the region is uneven and should be boosted through further research.



A study should be undertaken to recommend methods of supporting the continuation of these cultural traditions. Many groups are available to help with initiatives related to cultural traditions: the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, the Delmarva Folklife Project, the Maryland Historical Trust, the Maryland Humanities Council, the Maryland State Arts Council, and the Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University.

**Interpretation of Diverse Cultures** – Only recently has it become possible for visitors to learn about the history and living traditions of many cultures here:

**African-Americans** – African-American interpretive sites exist and are promoted in the region, but the richness of this heritage is under-represented.

**American Indians** – The area’s American Indian history and prehistory is similarly under-represented. The archeological record has yet to be tapped for interpretive purposes. This heritage area is among the few regions in the eastern United States with a living tradition of American Indians.

**Watermen** – The watermen’s culture is celebrated in several museums such as the new Smith Island Center, which tells the story of watermen in that isolated island community.

**Other Groups** – The story of newcomers to the region’s cultural mix, notably Hispanic and Asian immigrants, has not yet been interpreted to the public.

Many of the interpretive resources that do interpret local cultures, however, have involved the cultural groups themselves. The direct involvement of local groups in interpreting their own history lends additional authenticity to these endeavors.

**Cultural Hearth and Colonial Heritage** – The concept of “cultural hearth” comes from cultural geographers, who study the dispersion of people and their settlement patterns. In the United States, the term often refers to areas settled in colonial times, places from which settlers began their journeys westward. Groups who first settled the Atlantic seaboard later moved beyond the Appalachians, and then to the Midwest. As one of the sites of earliest European settlement in colonial America, the Lower Eastern Shore may have special appeal to Americans whose roots may be found here and for others who enjoy learning about colonial history.

**Family Heritage** – Family roots in the area are widespread and deep, which is characteristic of many rural areas. During the process of gathering information for this management plan, a meeting was held with professional and amateur historians. Many of the meeting participants noted that their ancestors arrived here in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many visitors find their way to

this area because of genealogical interests. The Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture is an excellent resource that serves these interests.

**Authenticity** – One participant in a meeting held during the planning process noted that the region was becoming more diverse as people from other states move in, stating that the area was beginning to look more like “someone else’s interpretation of what the area might have been.” Although this expression of concern is well worth heeding, across much of the region the landscape, towns, and interpretive sites demonstrate a sense of historical continuity and special coherence. Tools and techniques used to preserve this kind of community character is addressed in Chapter 7 (Stewardship).

Although interpretive initiatives in the Lower Eastern Shore generally respect authenticity, there has been a noticeable tendency to move old buildings in order to interpret or save them. While this option is preferable to demolition, the “best practice” in historic preservation is to leave these buildings in place. The context of a building is a part of its significance.

Of course, the moving of buildings here has a long history of its own for purely practical reasons. For example, two of the churches on Smith Island were disassembled and moved to their current locations when the communities where they were originally built were abandoned to the rising waters of Chesapeake Bay. The Ward Brothers’ Workshop in Crisfield is actually three buildings that the decoy carvers combined into one workshop. The Sarah Martin Done house, built about 1840, was moved in 1955 to its location behind Teackle Mansion. This building will provide needed space for administration, interpretation, and events.

## **The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network**

The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network is an opportunity for sites in the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area to gain greater exposure to an audience interested in the Chesapeake Bay’s history, nature, and culture. Sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Program, a consortium of federal and state agencies led by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, the network is a special program of the National Park Service. As this program’s literature states, it is designed to:

“link a diverse array of special places within the Bay watershed, including parks, wildlife refuges, historic communities, maritime museums, waterways and more. The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network tells the Bay story through these real places and resources. The Gateways Network provides an entry point and guide for people to more easily experience, enjoy and learn about the Bay, its themes and its connections to the broader watershed. Linking the places people value to an

understanding of the Chesapeake Bay as a system is an integral part of the effort to conserve and restore the environment of the Bay.

“The Gateways Network is composed of several types of places – hubs, regional information centers, sites, and connectors (water trails, trails and byways) – all of which participate in the Network on a voluntary basis.... There are many communities and institutions with resources to share, stories to tell, and interest in becoming a part of the Gateways Network. Ultimately, the whole Bay story will be woven together by many partners interpreting the themes appropriate to their particular place.”

Individual sites within the Chesapeake Bay watershed apply to the Gateways Network for recognition as regional information centers, sites and connectors (a limited number are hubs responsible for regional interpretation). Once recognized, sites are then eligible to apply for grants. In their applications, sites are asked how they plan to interpret at least one of the Gateways Network themes. Four sites in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area were recognized in the first year of the program: the Smith Island Center (Somerset County); Janes Island State Park, Crisfield (Somerset County); Ward Museum, Salisbury (Wicomico County); and Bailey Memorial Gateway at Sturgis Park, Snow Hill (Worcester County). The NPS has since awarded the Ward Museum a \$30,000 grant to assist in outdoor interpretation and landscaping.

More information on the program is available at 1-800 YOUR BAY or on the program’s website, [www.chesapeakebay.net/gateways.htm](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/gateways.htm).

Lower Eastern Shore sites that lie within the Atlantic and Coastal Bays watershed are not eligible for this program, but may be able to apply for support from the Maryland Coastal Bays Program for initiatives that focus on the environment.

## **Themes**

Whenever possible, sites in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should work with the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, to capitalize on its capacity for Bay-wide and even national promotion. The interpretive themes chosen for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should employ the interpretive framework developed for the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. Although this framework was only recently distributed to the public (in the year 2000), it promises to become an important basis for future interpretive efforts in the region.

**Table 4.1 Comparison of Thematic Topics**

<b>Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network</b>	<b>Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area</b>
The Living, Natural Bay	A Watery World: The Living, Natural Bays and Rivers of the Chesapeake and the Atlantic
Peoples of the Bay	The Land of Plenty: Peoples and Settlement on the Lower Eastern Shore
Settlement of the Bay	
An Economic Resource: Commerce, Productivity and Transportation	Lifelines and Livelihoods: Commerce, Productivity, and Transportation
Military and Naval Presence on the Bay	Military and Naval Heritage on the Lower Eastern Shore
The Bay as a Source of Recreation and Renewal	Great Escapes: Recreation and Renewal
Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability of the Bay	Land, Water, and Action: Stewardship and Sustainability

The Lower Eastern Shore, however, has the special challenge of adapting the interpretive themes of the network to match conditions in the three-county area. The themes must be broadened to address the agricultural and forested heart of the region, as well as the beaches and coastal bays of Ocean City and Assateague Island. Selection and combination of Chesapeake Bay framework themes shown in Table 4.1 reflect analysis of the major “stories” in the Lower Eastern Shore.

Different themes apply in greater or lesser ways to different interpretive resources in the region, as shown in Table 4.2. For example, although military and naval heritage is an important topic in the history of the Lower Eastern Shore, little interpretation about this heritage is available.

One important message for interpretive planning and development in the Lower Eastern Shore is to celebrate cultural diversity. As implied in the number of findings related to this idea, participants in the planning process expressed a strong interest in emphasizing the variety of cultures and communities in the region. They recommended that sites and programs specifically focus on research, interpretation, and involvement of cultural groups. They also recommended that this be done as much as possible within every theme, rather than singling out one or more cultures in a separate theme. “Packaging” (such as the LESH’s current brochure on African-American sites) can help visitors and residents find information about a specific topic that may be threaded through every theme.

## **Potential Stories Relating to Thematic Topics**

The interpretive framework for the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network suggests a number of stories related to the themes outlined there. Listed below are a few additional themes that are tailored to the Lower Eastern Shore. These are not complete, but only meant to suggest a direction that interpretation could take. Some of them are already interpreted, but have been added for interest and illustration. The order of the thematic topics here suggests a priority order that differs from that used by the Gateways Network.

### **1 A Watery World: The Living, Natural Bays and Rivers of the Chesapeake and the Atlantic**

- Bays and their marshes: Habitat for a vast population of migrating waterfowl
- The Pocomoke is the deepest river on the Eastern Shore
- Chincoteague Bay and Assateague Island are two components of the same coastal system
- The “microclimates” of the Chesapeake Bay: Fishing Bay, Monie Bay, Tangier Sound, and Pocomoke Sound are each different places, complete with their own weather and water patterns
- Islands of the Chesapeake
- The steamboat era across the region
- “Bones” on the beach: Maritime archeology is not just underwater (the story of inlet formation on Assateague Island and how ships stranded in old inlets are covered with sand, to emerge decades later as natural erosion reveals them)
- Dramatic opening: The raging storm that opened the Ocean City inlet changed the town and the bays
- Forested wetlands: Habitat for many critters

### **2 Great Escapes: Recreation and Renewal**

- Ocean City arose as a nineteenth-century resort town run by women
- The rise of sea-kayaking on Chincoteague Bay
- Sailing on the Chesapeake and Chincoteague Bays
- Paddling on the Pocomoke
- From the Annemessex River to Assateague Island: Gunning across the Lower Eastern Shore
- The art, craft, and industry of the decoy
- Baseball on the Lower Eastern Shore
- Early twentieth-century entertainment (such as movie theaters)

### **3 Land, Water, and Action: Stewardship and Sustainability**

- Chincoteague oysters and their decline
- Saving the rich soils of the Lower Eastern Shore
- The end of the age of sail and the survival of the skipjacks
- Development of boats specifically for this region
- Waterfowl hunting
- The struggle to save Smith Island from natural erosion
- Restoration of shad and yellow perch, rockfish (striped bass), crabs, and oysters

### **4 The Land of Plenty: Peoples and Settlement on the Lower Eastern Shore**

- Stories of the founding of colonial county seats: Princess Anne, Snow Hill, and Salisbury
- The life and times of Smith Island
- The Lower Eastern Shore as “cultural hearth”: Where did the settlers’ descendants go from here?
- The strong role of religion in the settlement and ways of life in the region, including (but not limited to) Quakers, Methodists, and Presbyterians
- American Indian stories from “contact” and the colonial era
- Emancipation and freedom for African Americans on the Lower Eastern Shore, and the establishment of free black communities in places such as Allen
- Early pirates and their influence on settlement
- Living cultures and how they survived here
- The rich archeological heritage of the Lower Eastern Shore, both prehistoric and historic
- The remarkable tradition of firefighting on the Lower Eastern Shore
- Banking in Ocean City: The men had their bank, and the women had theirs
- Somerset County has many of the earliest, most complete land records and port records in the United States. These records are now housed in the Hall of Records in Annapolis. The Nabb Research Center also has the records catalogued on microfiche.
- The Oyster Wars and Scarborough line disputes
- The Mason-Dixon Line and Transpeninsular Line. This is the line that established the southern boundary of Pennsylvania before its three lower counties separated to become the state of Delaware.

## **5 Lifelines and Livelihoods: Commerce, Productivity, and Transportation**

- Colonial plantations on the Lower Eastern Shore
- Forestry then and now
- Bog iron and canal-building
- The rise of railroads on the Lower Eastern Shore and their relationship to towns of the region
- The unique ship-building tradition of Sharptown
- U.S. Route 113’s “string of pearls”: Colonial towns on a colonial route (Berlin, Snow Hill, Pocomoke City)
- Changing times, changing crops: Succession in agriculture, from tobacco, to wheat, to fruits and vegetables, to today’s corn, soybeans, and poultry – the economic forces that led to successive specialization, and the dislocations that came with change



The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee assisted in the placement of a historical marker at this site, the Asbury United Methodist Church in Allen, Wicomico County. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

## **6 Military and Naval Heritage on the Lower Eastern Shore**

- Claiborne and Lord Baltimore: The first battle between English-speaking peoples in the New World took place on the Pocomoke River in 1635; the issue was control over Kent Island
- The Somerset Militia
- The Tories of Salisbury and the Continental Army
- Pemberton and the Civil War
- “Breadbasket of the Revolution”
- Revolutionary War heroes
- Picaroons (Loyalist pirates) and the Revolutionary War
- Battle of Kedges Straits: Also known as the “Battle of the Barges,” this was the last sea battle of the Revolutionary War; the year after Cornwallis’ surrender, patriot and Picaroon forces fought in the waters off Crisfield
- Lower Eastern Shore and the Civil War

For further discussion of these topics and their relationship to interpretive sites in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, please refer to Tables 4.2a-d.

## The Interpretive Strategy

The interpretive strategy for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is composed of goals for the visitor experience and a series of steps for developing a regional interpretive system. A key recommendation here is to create an in-depth set of interpretive strategies to assist in implementing the heritage area management plan. Developing these strategies would involve administrators, curators, and volunteers associated with the region's existing museums, interpretive centers, and historic and natural sites. That plan should incorporate specific programs and initiatives to address the needs of existing and new sites.

### Goals for the Visitor Experience

The visitor experience is what visitors feel and learn as they spend their time and find their way in the heritage area. Visitors should find the experience meaningful, memorable, and satisfying. The audience for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area includes vacationing couples, retired persons, and families, as discussed in Chapter 5 (Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services). The visitor experience includes the following:

**Advance Information** – As they plan their trips, visitors should be able to easily obtain as much information as they desire about the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. Visitors form opinions readily from such information. Websites, brochures, and other information should convey a warm welcome and the special character of the region. The specifics of marketing and promotion are addressed in Chapter 5 (Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services).

**Orientation and Wayfinding** – Visitors should understand that they are entering the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. Once there, they should be directed to a place where they can learn about the region and its significance and themes and gain an introduction to interpretive sites and attractions, programs, communities, and the services they will need during their stay. Once moving throughout the region, they should encounter signs and materials that create a clearly defined and easily understood wayfinding system, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Orientation and Linkages).

A “graphic identity” should be created for the region. This identity includes color, format, logo, font, and other aspects of the “look” of a heritage area’s signs and other materials, from stationery to brochures. The graphic identity for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should fit in with the graphic identity that the State of Maryland is creating for the state system of heritage areas. The need for a graphic identity is addressed in more detail in Chapter 5 (Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services).



**Experiencing the Landscape** – Visitors should understand that the landscape is an important part of the experience in visiting the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. There are two categories for this experience, first, roads and touring by automobile; and second, outdoor recreation. Driving is a critical factor in the visitor experience and the enjoyment of the scenery from automobiles. Drivers and passengers should be encouraged to “read” the natural and cultural elements of the landscapes through which they will pass, to lend meaning to travel between sites and communities.

Ways to experience the landscape through outdoor recreation should also be a part of any visit. All should enjoy some kind of water access as a part of their visit; this can be active, as in canoeing, sailing, or sea-kayaking, or simply enjoying the water at ferry crossings at Whitehaven or Upper Ferry, during the 14-mile passage to Smith Island, or from such shoreline access points as Public Landing, with its spectacular view of Chincoteague Bay.

**Coordinated and Engaging Interpretive Programming** – Visitors should be encouraged to seek out multiple venues to enjoy the region’s interpretive offerings. At all locations, visitors should be able to learn about the region’s major interpretive themes. Partners of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area will continue to provide visitors with interpretation specific to their sites, but should also develop interpretation that ties their sites to other attractions and to the heritage area as a whole. Each site should demonstrate how its interpretive focus fits into the overall interpretive context of the heritage area.

**Independent Discovery** – Visitors should be able to move at their own pace and in their own direction. Preferred routes and coordinated packages can guide visitors’ choices, but visitors should be able to design unique and fulfilling experiences on their own.

**Mix of Activities** – One principle of heritage tourism, as described in Chapter 5, is that visitors should be encouraged to engage in a variety of activities in addition to recreation and visiting interpretive sites. This is an essential role for communities within the heritage area, in providing such visitor services as dining, lodging, and shopping. Opportunities for such entertainment as festivals, musical performances, and art shows should be readily available and an expected part of the experience. Visitors should also understand, however, that part of enjoying the Lower Eastern Shore is to experience the slower pace found here.



One of the goals of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is to give every visitor an opportunity to enjoy the water. Fishing is a frequent activity in Crisfield, Somerset County. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Hospitality and Fun** – Ways for visitors to enjoy themselves should be explicitly addressed in all activities and programs. Moreover, as visitors encounter hotel clerks, bank tellers, wait staff, and many other residents who help them find their way, they should receive a sense of warm hospitality. Visitors particularly enjoy taking part in hands-on activities or meeting storytellers and costumed interpreters. A farm visit or a sail with a skipjack captain would take most visitors into a completely new experience, far from their everyday lives. A bit of zaniness and the unexpected can be part of the fun.

**Maryland Grown, Maryland Made** – Visitors should have numerous opportunities to take home a memento of the Lower Eastern Shore. Purchasing products from farmstands is an expected part of the “driving to (and from) Ocean City” experience and should be maintained. Plant nurseries, farmers’ markets, art galleries, gift shops, artisans’ workshops, seafood markets, and other stores featuring Maryland products and souvenirs should be available at a variety of locations throughout the region. Visitors should be encouraged to experience at least one great meal with local seafood and other locally grown foods.

**Maryland Memories** – Visitors should leave with an enthusiasm for returning to visit the sites and communities they missed, and find themselves recommending the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area to others as great place to visit. The sunshine and fun of the Lower Eastern Shore should remain a lasting part of their memories, along with their growing interest in its history and future.

## **Creating a Regional System of Interpretation**

As suggested in the findings, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area has a solid foundation of existing interpretive resources and plans for more. Each one, no matter how modest or grand, has made much out of available ideas and support. Thanks to these individual efforts, it is possible for all to move to a new level of achievement. Now it is time for these sites to join together with the goals of expanding the audience and resources for all sites – existing and proposed – and using the entire region and its many resources to tell the stories of the rich heritage here. Working together and supported by the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council, its partners, and the state of Maryland, these interpreters can create a great regional system that is more than the sum of its parts.

The steps necessary to create this system are listed below, in priority order. The actions listed at the end of this chapter provide a summary of steps to be undertaken within the next five years (Phase 1). The summary also describes specific sites and initiatives, and sketches expectations for a second phase to begin after the first five years. Additional steps to be undertaken by the new management entity, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council, are presented in Chapter 8, Management.

Although the LESHHC and MHAA are key players in stimulating the implementation of this strategy, they are not expected to be the sole players or sources of support. The steps and actions envisioned here will be shared by partners and supported by a variety of sources including corporations, foundations, nonprofit grantors, individual donors, and local, state, and federal agencies. Many actions depend on the decisions and efforts of the boards and volunteers at individual interpretive resources.

- 1 Create an Interpretation Committee** – Form an Interpretation Committee that includes representatives of interested interpretive partners. This committee will collaborate with the LESHHC in developing interpretation standards (Step 2). Ultimately, this group could become an interpretation council made up of representatives from partner sites that have met specific interpretive standards set by the heritage area, as addressed in Step 3.
  
- 2 Develop Interpretation Standards** – Establish regional standards to guide the interpretation of centers, sites, and programs in the heritage area. Set priorities for meeting the needs of interpretive sites across the region, determine how the interpretation standards will be implemented at existing sites, and identify regional projects to be led by the LESHHC or other partners.

Offer “rewards” to interpretive sites for endorsing the regional system, offering regional interpretation, undergoing docent and hospitality training,

or working to upgrade their offerings. One of these rewards could include permission to use a Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area logo and to receive special attention and assistance from LESHHC. Consider using a three-tiered approach, from “least interpreted” to “most interpreted,” as follows:

**Third-Tier Sites (Bronze)** – These sites are already open and interpreted to the public.

**Second-Tier Sites (Silver)** – These sites meet the criteria for the third tier, plus have achieved inclusion in the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network program (or a similar standard as applied to the Atlantic/Coastal Bays part of the heritage area).

**First-Tier Sites (Gold)** – These sites meet specific interpretive and operational guidelines established for the heritage area.

- 3 Focus on Critical Early Actions** – Early action toward stronger regional interpretation should concentrate on four sites: The Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, Pemberton Historical Park, Teackle Mansion, and Furnace Town. For the purposes of this plan, Furnace Town is assumed to include the Nassawango Creek Preserve and its one-mile Paul Leifer Nature Trail, operated by The Nature Conservancy. The preserve and trail offer important interpretation of the region’s ecology.

All four of these sites are situated close to one another near the center of the region. Together, they effectively cover all thematic topics and historical periods. These four sites are within easy reach of Ocean City, a primary market in the early phases of implementing this plan, as discussed in Chapter 5 (Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services). The Ward Museum is open full time. Furnace Town’s grounds are open during its off-season (from November to March), and special events are offered year-round. Helping all to achieve a year-round interpretive presence at least at Furnace Town’s level is a critical aspect of this early action.

- 4 Develop Regional Interpretive Centers** – In phases, create three regional interpretive centers to provide visitor orientation – one each in Salisbury, Ocean City, and Pocomoke City. Later, a fourth interpretive center could be developed in western Wicomico County (possibly Mardela Springs) and, possibly, also in Crisfield. The LESHHC should *not* take on the responsibility of creating or managing these sites. The Regional Interpretive Center concept is discussed more fully in Chapter 3 (Orientation and Linkages). The rationale for these sites is as follows:

- i Ward Museum** – The Ward Museum could function as the first interpretive center, temporarily or permanently, because it is central,

easily accessible, and open full-time and it tells an important story about the interaction of nature and culture.

- ii **Ocean City** – Ocean City is the major destination within the region; such a facility would enable the region to tell its story to a major audience. Ocean City is planning to create an information kiosk as soon as possible in support of this concept. The Lifesaving Museum could assist in providing an overview of the region’s heritage. Over the next five years, Ocean City should create a regional interpretive center that would function as an in-town attraction even as it educates visitors about the heritage of the entire region.
  - iii **Pocomoke City** – Pocomoke City occupies a strategic location at the southern end of the Heritage Area, and furthermore offers a major project, the Pocomoke River Discovery Center, with significant public support, an attractive site in hand, and a portion of the funds needed already identified.
  - iv **Western Wicomico County (Future)** – The need for a “gateway” facility in western Wicomico County has already been identified in an independent tourism study conducted by the county. This idea could be refined to support the needs of the entire region.
  - v **Crisfield (Future)** – Because Crisfield represents a “water entry” gateway to the Heritage Area and is a destination for group tours to Smith and Tangier Islands, Crisfield might become a fifth location for a Regional Interpretive Center over the long range.
- 5 Undertake More Regional Interpretation Initiatives** – Support enriched and additional regional interpretive initiatives such as driving tours, outdoor exhibits (including “wayside” interpretive signs), publications, research, and other activities and programs.
- 6 Focus on Ways to Link Sites** – In keeping with the strategy described in Chapter 3, create interpreted linkages among regional facilities (step 5) and existing sites (step 8). This step supports step 6.
- 7 Establish a Regional Network of Interpretive Sites** – Early action is suggested above in Step 4, addressing the needs of four centrally located sites: The Ward Museum, Pemberton Historical Park, Teackle Mansion, and Furnace Town. As rapidly as possible, using standards and assistance, create a system of interpretation supporting the heritage area and its themes among existing sites. Existing sites that could help initially to promote the region’s interpretive themes are discussed in the Phase 1 summary of actions at the end of this chapter.

- 8 Promote Community Interpretation and Outreach** – This step is a companion to step 8. A number of high-quality smaller sites or others with a special focus on local community interests and needs would do well to concentrate on improving local interpretation. In the process, some of these might become the Local Visitor Information Centers envisioned in Chapter 3, Orientation and Linkages, or develop a partnership arrangement with another site in the community, such as a business or government office, that can offer more open hours. The latter could alert volunteers associated with the site when visitors are interested in stopping by.

These sites and others such as those identified in step 8 should also provide local leadership in creating or refining such community-based interpretive opportunities as walking tours and local festivals, to reach out to residents and in the process enlist their support for the Heritage Area. A small grants program (say, \$100 to \$1,000) focused on community interpretation might be useful to encourage such efforts.

- 9 Develop New Sites or Initiatives to Support Interpretive Themes** – Support the creation of new or substantially improved sites to address interpretive themes and stories, as appropriate. Regional interpretive strategies should set forth guidelines for obtaining substantial support from the LESH and MHAA for new sites, which should include a requirement for substantial planning for sustainability and operations and an analysis of community economic impact. A portion of the necessary support for such planning and analysis could come from the heritage area program.

The following table lists opportunities identified during the planning process. These possibilities are discussed further in the following section on phasing. Several are improvements to existing sites. Others have drawn up plans or otherwise have begun to seek support.

**Table 4.3 Status of Development at Proposed Interpretive Sites**

Site	Location	Improvements	Plans
<b>Somerset County</b>			
Bending Water Park / Accohannock Museum	Marion	●	●
Deal Island Skipjack Museum	Deal Island		●
Early Americana Collection	Somerset County	●	
Jenkins Creek Nature Center	Somerset County		●
Teackle Mansion Interpretive Center	Princess Anne	●	●
<b>Wicomico County</b>			
Boulevard Center for the Performing Arts	Salisbury	●	●
Charles H. Chipman Center	Salisbury		●
Visitor Info. Center on U.S. Route 50	Wicomico County		●
Double Mills	Mardela Springs		●
Passerdyke Cottage (Allen Historical Soc.)	Allen		●
Watermen's Museum	Nanticoke		●
West Side Heritage Museum	Mardela Springs	●	
<b>Worcester County</b>			
Pocomoke River Discovery Center	Pocomoke City		●
Mar-Va Theater	Pocomoke City	●	
Snow Hill interpretive programs and sites	Snow Hill	●	

## Summary of Actions

The following text provides detailed observations and recommendations for action that may be adopted immediately by individual sites, organizations, and communities or incorporated into regional interpretive strategies, or both.

## **Phase 1**

- 4.1 Create an Interpretation Committee** – See previous section.
  
- 4.2 Develop Interpretation Standards** – Set high standards for opening hours, facilities, docent and hospitality training, and regional interpretation. Extend the use of a heritage area logo and other privileges and assistance to these sites for meeting the standards (see also the discussion under step 3). This is one form of support for the regional interpretive network described in step 8.

### **Critical Early Actions**

- 4.3 Capitalize on Interpretation at Furnace Town**, near Snow Hill, Worcester County – Continue to capitalize on the excellent interpretation and programs at this site, including the Nassawango Creek Preserve operated by The Nature Conservancy. Seek ways of enhancing interpretation at both sites to accommodate the interpretive themes in this plan and interpret regional history and ecology. Promote and package this site; continue to enlarge its educational uses.
  
- 4.4 Develop a Master Plan for Pemberton Historical Park**, Salisbury, Wicomico County – Develop a site and museum master plan according to professional standards. Find support to keep the site open to the maximum extent appropriate (this may vary according to season and facility – trails, Pemberton Hall, and the Wicomico County Historical Society building may vary in their hours and offering. Save more of the surrounding open space before it is developed for housing. Develop more historical landscape interpretation to support the concept of a plantation museum. Invest in archeology and archeological interpretation, particularly as it affects the eighteenth-century landing and the underwater remains of its wharf. Create interpretation supporting the heritage area and its interpretive themes. Install better directional signage on surrounding roads.
  
- 4.5 Continue the Restoration of Teackle Mansion**, Princess Anne, Somerset County – This is an important early nineteenth-century residence that has undergone exterior restoration. Work was nearing completion on this aspect of the building’s restoration as this plan went into a public review phase in early 2002. Work on the interior and collection of furnishings proceeds at a slower pace, in need of substantial funding over a long period to accomplish the vision of the organization. Develop



a phased strategy for opening the house on more days and for longer hours. Pursue the goal of keeping the site open on a year-round basis. Continue to address repair and conservation needs. Begin early phases of a sustainability strategy, improving the grounds and creating an exhibit/function facility in association with a neighboring property, which has been acquired. Rental of the facility and use of the grounds for parties would provide additional income.

### **Regional Interpretive Centers**

- 4.6 Establish Regional Interpretive Centers** – These centers would introduce visitors to the heritage area’s interpretive themes. They would be established in the following locations:

**Ward Museum, Salisbury, Wicomico County** – This requires the museum to broaden the scope of its interpretation on behalf of the entire region; because of its focus on Eastern Shore nature and culture, this is already the museum’s direction. An opportunity exists to begin this process through current plans for installation of outdoor exhibits supported by the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. If the museum accepts this status within the heritage area’s regional system, it should seek a new status within the Gateways Network as a “regional information center.”

In addition, enhanced signage should be installed to direct visitors to this site, including expanding sign locations to include key “gateway” locations on U.S. Route 50 (including the bypass) and U.S. Route 13. Signs could state “Ward Museum – Regional Heritage Center” and use a creative combination of the logos for both the museum and the heritage area. This approach could be repeated on smaller “pathfinder signs” on city streets, as is done now, but with a new sign design incorporating the idea of the heritage area. Current pathfinder signs have reached the end of their useful life and are in need of replacement.

**Ocean City, Worcester County** – A kiosk is proposed in the Downtown Ocean City Target Investment Area (see Chapter 6) and can acquaint visitors with Ocean City, the coastal bays, and the entire region. This would be located close to boardwalk visitors. Relevant exhibits at the Lifesaving Museum could supplement this early initiative. Phase 2 continues this idea in suggesting that Ocean City develop a new attraction based on this idea.

**Pocomoke City, Worcester County** – Some of the necessary funding for the Pocomoke River Discovery Center has already been identified, and plans are being developed for the renovation of an attractive early

twentieth-century car dealership building. The building occupies a highly visible site on the Pocomoke River beside the well-known drawbridge on the way into town. It offers a substantial new attraction for the region addressing an important aspect of the natural resources of the region.

In addition, it offers a major opportunity for a Regional Interpretive Center at the southern end of the heritage area where a substantial number of visitors enter. This center could ultimately connect with Snow Hill via a “floating classroom” boat, to be used by visitors and groups on weekends and during the summer, and to be available for student groups to enjoy during the school year.

- 4.7 Heritage Area Brochure** – Create an interpretive brochure for the entire Lower Eastern Shore region or update the existing brochure. This effort is also a component of the heritage area marketing strategy as discussed in Chapter 5 (Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services).

### **Regional Orientation Exhibits**

- 4.8 Install Regional Orientation Exhibits** – These exhibits should focus on the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area and its partner sites. They should be installed at the following locations:

**Somerset County Visitor Information Center** – This center is located on U.S. Route 13 just west of Princess Anne.

**State Welcome Center** – This center is located on U.S. Route 13 at Pocomoke City, north of the entry to the state from Virginia’s Eastern Shore.

**Wicomico County Visitor Information Center** – This center is located on U.S. Route 13 between Salisbury and Delmar, also accessible from U.S. Route 50 (the new Salisbury Bypass).

### **Interpretation along Roads and Waterways**

- 4.9 Create a Scenic Roads Network** – Provide interpretation through brochures, a guidebook and wayside interpretive signage for the heritage area’s designated Scenic Roads Network. Use this interpretation to present heritage area themes, apply themes to landscapes along the scenic roads, and link with the interpretation of attractions and communities. Seek designation of additional State and National Scenic

Byways in the region, supporting interpretation to accompany them. See discussion in Chapter 3.

- 4.10 Designate the Lower Eastern Shore Scenic Byway Loop** – Support corridor planning and nomination for national scenic byway status. The heritage area should focus its contribution on interpretation, to encourage additions to the interpretive experience on the portion of the route shared with the Beach-to-Bay Indian Trail, and to link Wicomico County sites to this potential dual system of nationally recognized routes. Stewardship efforts within the corridor management plan are also highly important in identifying ways to protect this resource, strategic and important to both heritage tourism and interpretation. See discussion in Chapter 3.
- 4.11 Continue to Support the Beach-to-Bay Indian Trail** – This trail should be supported through its sponsoring organization. This trail is located in Somerset and Worcester Counties. Continue to promote it to a wider audience and continue to promote its use for bicycling as well as driving. Support additional planning and development as needed. See discussion in Chapter 3.
- 4.12 Expand Interpretation on Trails and Greenways** – Interpretation associated with recreational trails (land and water) and greenways should be improved.
- 4.13 Promote Cultural Audio Tours** – Support development and wide distribution of the cultural audio tours being developed by the Maryland State Arts Council and the Maryland Historical Trust.

### **Promotions and Brochures**

- 4.14 Packaging** – Create initial promotional packages to market the Ward Museum, Pemberton Historical Park, Teackle Mansion, and Furnace Town.
- 4.15 Recreational Brochure** – Create a brochure on “beach-to-bay” recreational opportunities in the three counties of the Lower Eastern Shore. (This idea also represents a part of the marketing strategy for the heritage area as discussed in Chapter 5, and is a duplicate recommendation in the discussion of linkages in Chapter 3.)
- 4.16 Brochure for Families and Children** – Create a “For Families” brochure. This brochure would also be a component of the marketing strategy for the region.

## Interpretive Linkages

**4.17 Establish a Regional Network of Interpretive Sites** – With assistance as appropriate from the LESHHC and others, existing museums, sites, events, and other interpretive resources across the region should begin planning and seeking assistance to contribute to the regional interpretive system envisioned in this strategy. These partners should emphasize two areas:

**Expanded Interpretation** – Create expanded interpretation to tell a broader story based on regional context and interpretive themes, involving such activities as exhibit planning, collections management, research, or the hosting of a traveling exhibit.

**Operational Needs** – Provide assistance in addressing a variety of operational needs, such as grant writing, brochure development and marketing, solicitation of funding and endowments, site and operational planning, board development, and interpretation. The LESHHC's share of this assistance can take the form of competitive matching grants, technical assistance, and endorsements or assistance in approaching foundations and other sources of funding. High priority partners are suggested in Table 4.3, and discussed in the following section on phasing, but this is not meant to exclude others who might qualify with an idea that supports the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area's interpretive strategy. It should be recognized that demand for such assistance is likely to outstrip the LESHHC's ability to meet the demand.

**Criteria for Applications** – LESHHC should set forth explicit criteria for judging applications. These criteria might include such points as:

- Proportion of proposed match;
- Amount of funding in hand;
- Thematic focus;
- The extent to which the results would enhance the regional system;
- Evidence of public support; and
- Track record with others' or previous grants, and other criteria as the LESHHC might establish. The Interpretive Advisory Committee should assist the LESHHC in this task.

**4.18 Nominate Sites to the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network** – Nominate existing interpretive sites for inclusion in this network sponsored by the National Park Service (NPS). Nominations are accepted on a rolling basis. Once accepted, sites are part of the regional interpretation associated with the Chesapeake Bay as a whole, are eligible for NPS grants, and are promoted through a website and visitor maps. Technical assistance from the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council should focus on sites listed in Phase 1, Section 1.3 below, to reinforce Phase 1. All sites within the Recognized Heritage Area, however, should be encouraged to pursue Gateways Network recognition.

**4.19 Implement the Phase 1 Interpretive Strategy** – The following is a list of high-priority sites:

**Somerset County**

Crisfield Historical Museum, Crisfield  
Smith Island Cultural Center, Smith Island  
Teackle Mansion, Princess Anne (Early Action 4.6)  
Ward Brothers Workshop, Crisfield

**Wicomico County**

Chipman Center, Salisbury  
Nabb Research Center, Salisbury  
Pemberton Historical Park, Salisbury (Early Action 4.5)  
Poplar Hill Mansion, Salisbury  
Salisbury Zoo, Salisbury  
Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, Salisbury (Early Action 4.7)  
West Side Heritage Museum, Mardela Springs

**Worcester County**

Assateague Island visitor facilities (state and federal)  
Calvin B. Taylor House Museum, Berlin  
Furnace Town and Nassawango Creek Preserve, Snow Hill vicinity  
(Early Action 4.4)  
Julia A. Purnell Museum, Snow Hill  
Life Saving Station Museum, Ocean City  
Mariners' Country Down and Store

**4.20 Support Community Interpretation** – Suggested ideas are discussed in a following section: added planning for the Adkins Historical and Museum Complex, Mardela Springs (interpretive planning, management planning, and master planning the site); supporting exhibits and public art relating to local history in the planning and development of the Boulevard Theatre for the Performing Arts; creating skipjack touring

opportunities for visitors at Deal Island; and installing outdoor interpretation at Fairmount Academy.

- 4.21 Create and Improve Walking Tours** – Improve existing walking tours by relating their content to the heritage area themes and develop new tours for towns that have not yet produced them, including creating opportunities for guided tours. The following communities have already developed and marketed self-guided walking tours:

**Somerset County**

Crisfield  
Princess Anne  
Smith Island

**Wicomico County**

Allen Walking/Driving Tour  
Newtown Neighborhood, Salisbury  
Downtown Salisbury  
Whitehaven (New Site) – See section on existing sites

**Worcester County**

Berlin  
Ocean City  
Pocomoke City  
Snow Hill

- 4.22 Support Implementation of Interpretive Themes** – Newly built resources should support the interpretive themes adopted by the heritage area. They should also assist in visitor orientation across the entire region. A plan for operational sustainability and a community economic impact analysis should be demonstrated prior to substantial assistance through the heritage area. The new sites listed below would greatly benefit the interpretation of the Lower Eastern Shore. All address key interpretive themes or elements of themes. The Native American story is under-represented in relation to its importance the region’s story, the story of the watermen’s culture is untold beyond Smith Island, and attractions with substantial interpretation of the natural-resource aspects of the region are nonexistent.

**New Sites**

- 4.23 Support the Creation of Bending Water Park**, near Marion, Somerset County – The Accohannock Tribe, whose museum is currently located in the Marion Railroad Station, is planning a large cultural center and museum focusing on its heritage. This facility will be built near the Big

Annemessex River, north of Marion. It offers a substantial new attraction for the region addressing an essential element of the region's prehistory and history.

- 4.24 Support the Development of the Deal Island Skipjack Museum,** Deal Island Harbor and Wenona, Somerset County – This community, with the largest fleet of skipjacks on the Chesapeake Bay, proposes a skipjack heritage museum. Potential sites have been identified and some early planning has taken place. As a first step toward building the visitation to support such a project, it is possible to renovate a number of skipjacks to Coast Guard standards, so that they could be used for tourist trips as well as for oystering. This would add to their owners' income and create an unusual and attractive experience for visitors. The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, which is responsible for assisting Maryland's skipjack captains in maintaining these unique boats, strongly supports this idea and can offer assistance. Also in the beginning stages of this effort, an interpretive sign beside the marina would be attractive. (Deal Island is also associated two natural sites could become a components in an interpretive strategy for the natural heritage of the Lower Eastern Shore – see next action.)
- 4.25 Support the Tangier Sound Natural History Initiative** – Consider approaching a number of existing and proposed sites and programs as partners:
- **Martin National Wildlife Refuge** – This refuge is located on Smith Island. It is an existing site that is now managed as a satellite of the Blackwater National Refuge in Dorchester County.
  - **Mullins Education Center** – This center is a Chesapeake Bay Foundation facility on Smith Island.
  - **Monie Bay Unit** – This is a unit of the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve near Deal Island.
  - **Deal Island Natural Resource Management Area** – This is a State of Maryland site.
  - **Jenkins Creek Environmental Center (Proposed)** – This facility will be located near Crisfield.
- 4.26 Explore Links with Tangier Sound** – Explore the possibility of interpreting the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area's themes through interpretation of the natural resources of Tangier Sound and surrounding

natural areas. For existing sites, encourage the creation of interpretive materials and programs to conform to the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network Interpretive Framework, to the heritage area themes, and to the work of the “Heart of the Chesapeake” initiative of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (to protect the watersheds of Tangier and Pocomoke Sounds).

Consider a Local Visitor Information Center in Crisfield, possibly in conjunction with the initiative to create the Jenkins Creek Environmental Center; also boost interpretation for the Martin’s Neck visitor site on Smith Island. One model for the funding and programming of the center in Crisfield might be the Anita C. Leight Estuary Center at the Otter Point Creek unit of the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve north of Baltimore (the CBNERR is one of a number of such reserves nationwide, supported by federal and state funding). Make plans during Phase 1 and implement decisions collectively or separately as appropriate during Phase 2.

## **Phase 2**

After the first five years, it is expected that the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area will have an Interpretive Advisory Committee, standards for a regional interpretive system (and the system itself), regional interpretive initiatives and linkages, three regional centers, and one or more grants programs up and running. Refinement and greater definition of these ideas are to be undertaken in the development of interpretive strategies. Discussion with partners during the interpretive planning process may reduce this number of actions, but many will still be needed. Only after the top-priority actions identified in the plan are undertaken should the LESHCA and its partners turn to other actions. Consideration of longer-range actions includes:

- 4.27 Develop a Regional Interpretive Center in Ocean City** – In this phase, this center would become a new Ocean City attraction, featuring the history, culture, and natural resources of Ocean City and Assateague Island and relating all to the entire region’s history. This would supplement and greatly expand the function of the kiosk described for Phase 1. The kiosk would remain as a permanent facility.
  
- 4.28 Create a Western (Route 50) Visitor Information Center** – This center in Wicomico County would help to reach travelers who are driving east on U.S. Route 50. The county and municipalities will need to work together to identify a site, funding, and a proposal for a sustainable operation. This site will be needed once a sufficient number of visitors



are attracted to the heritage area and make it their destination, as they will need to encounter a “gateway” to help them know when and where they have arrived. As the county already is considering this initiative, earlier construction in Phase 1 is possible.

- 4.29 Build a Northern (Route 113) Visitor Information Center** – This facility in Worcester County would support the regional system of orientation and interpretive centers proposed for Phase 1. Worcester County is already considering this facility.
  
- 4.30 Produce a Regional Guidebook** – The LESHHC should continue its role in stimulating regional interpretive products such as brochures. After five years, with rising demand and the progress of historical research for the region, one or more partners should produce a regional guidebook.
  
- 4.31 Start a House and Garden Tour** – An annual house and garden tour that rotates among private properties within the heritage area would be a great deal of work, but rewarding. An event such as this can help to showcase the area’s other attractions and stimulate return visits. The statewide tour held in the spring of 2001 may be a useful model for a Lower Eastern Shore tour.

### **Educational Initiatives**

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should seek not only to improve the region’s economy but also to educate residents and visitors about the region’s local history, environment, and culture. For sites that are not open full time, it is possible to arrange that they be open by appointment for these uses, which could begin to widen their audience and provide needed income.

Reaching schoolchildren is crucial but challenging in an era of diminished funding for field trips. They can be reached through after-school programs as well as during the regular school day. To the extent possible, educational programs should be designed for double-duty in reaching families visiting the area. The actions below focus on possibilities for grades K-12. Both UMES and Salisbury University should be enlisted as partners in designing these programs.

- 4.32 Curriculum Guides** – Sponsor the creation of guides or special curricula for teachers to aid them in meeting the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program’s standards of learning (MSPAP). These guides should be updated on a regular basis. A curriculum guide should be produced for each of the key interpretive sites in the region. Encourage school districts to support teachers in using these tools. Offer teacher

training at specific interpretive sites or hold collectively sponsored workshops.

Recently passed federal legislation that mandates state testing for school performance could be a source of support, because Maryland will be expanding the MSPAP to include all grades. Significant federal funding accompanies this new mandate to enable states to establish this testing and associated curriculum development.

- 4.33 Web-Based Curricula** – Develop web-based curricula that stitch together the region’s sites, history, and environment and support MSPAP requirements; make it useful for not only teachers and students, but also families. This kind of initiative would be a strong candidate for an education-related grant. The LESHHC should become a partner in this effort.
- 4.34 School Bus Fund** – To allow more students to visit interpretive sites, create a fund to support the cost of school buses to transport them to these facilities. Allow these funds to be used for after-school programs as well as regular school day trips. As funds allow, expand this fund to support teacher-based initiatives in using regional sites.
- 4.35 Docent Training** – Create a program of regional or “circuit-rider” docents available to assist school-based programs and various sites that are not open full time. The docent training program should be conducted under the guidance of the state’s National Certification Program. It is important to note that docent training complements hospitality training, but one does not replace the other.

### **Enhancement of Existing Interpretive Sites – Phase 1**

This section and the one that follows describe individual interpretive resources and potential actions they might undertake with or without LESHHC and MHAA support. Below are ideas for existing interpretive sites that have the potential to meet high standards for a regional interpretation system or which for other strategic reasons should be addressed in Phase 1.

**Coastal Bays Learning Lab and National Seashore Visitor Center**, near Assateague Island, Worcester County – This facility would include two buildings side by side, combining certain functions. A site has been designated, plans are being drawn up, and funding is secured to create a pair of facilities that will vastly improve the current limited National Seashore Visitor Center. These facilities will offer a substantial new attraction for the region. Incorporating information about the entire Lower Eastern Shore should be a goal as exhibits are planned.

**Calvin B. Taylor Museum**, Berlin, Worcester County – Develop a long-term strategy for the management and interpretation of this site, including developing educational programming opportunities.

**Charles H. Chipman Center**, Salisbury, Wicomico County – This small and attractive performing arts center located in a historic African-American church already connects to cultural interpretation in the region by hosting performances of a variety of traditional music. Its second-story performance space needs to be made accessible to the disabled. The addition of interpretation, perhaps with dedicated space, to tell the story of the building, the church’s founders, and their roles in Salisbury, would add to its attractions.

**Crisfield (Tawes) Historical Museum**, Crisfield, Somerset County – Develop a long-term strategy for the management and interpretation of this site, including developing educational programming opportunities and driving tours with step-on guides.

**Julia A. Purnell Museum**, Snow Hill, Worcester County – Seek new and larger space for much of the collection, in Snow Hill’s downtown, retaining the current space (a chapel) for special functions and exhibits. Develop a long-term strategy for the management and interpretation of this site, including developing educational programming opportunities.



Tucked away in Snow Hill is the Julia A. Purnell Museum, which focuses on the history of Worcester County. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Life-Saving Station Museum**, Ocean City, Worcester County – Develop a long-term strategy for the management and interpretation of this site, including developing educational programming opportunities. Address accessibility issues.

**Mariners’ Country Down**, Berlin, Worcester County – This unique site in a quiet location outside Berlin is a favorite of shoppers at Christmas. It offers

attractive small buildings, imaginatively sited and designed in timeless styles, as sites for craftspeople and artisans, some of whom have their workshops here year-round. It is an unusual interpretive site, because it functions as a venue for the manufacture of arts, crafts, and fine furniture, as well as a location for the sale of these items. The commercial aspect of this site may make it eligible for Target Investment Area status. If any nonprofit status is obtained for a portion of the operation, a “friends of” group, or an individual workshop, the site may also be eligible for grants to support additional interpretation, especially about the cultural traditions of the Lower Eastern Shore.

**Nabb Research Center, Salisbury, Wicomico County** – This is a wonderful archive for historians and genealogists, but is not designed for the lay visitor. Genealogy enthusiasts who visit this center represent an audience for heritage area attractions and interpretation. Existing visitors would benefit from a small interpretive exhibit, which the center has investigated. Its installation would allow the site to be listed among interpretive attractions for casual visitors. The Institute for Museum and Library Services, through a program of the American Association of Museums, recently awarded the center funding for a review of its collections.

**Poplar Hill Mansion, Salisbury, Wicomico County** – This is a city-owned property with a resident curator. The facility is available for rental as a venue for events, and is open by appointment for tours. This site should develop a long-term strategy for interpretation, including developing educational programming opportunities.

**Salisbury Zoo, Salisbury, Wicomico** – This nationally acclaimed small zoo focuses on exhibits in a natural setting of almost four hundred North, Central, and South American mammals, birds, and reptiles and maintains a collection of captive waterfowl representing the species present on the Eastern Shore. The Ward Museum works to bring artists here who need to be able to see the birds to create accurate representations. Develop a long-term strategy for educational programming opportunities related to the heritage area.

**Smith Island Center, Smith Island** – This site should develop a long-term strategy for educational programming opportunities related to the heritage area. Through a program of the American Association of Museums, the Institute for Museum and Library Services recently provided the center with funding for a review of its collections. The Island itself walks a delicate balance between too much visitation and not enough. Several businesses are reliant on tourism, and tourism dollars are necessary to employ residents and keep the community alive. The lack of cars, however, keeps the worst tourism impacts to a minimum.

**Ward Brothers’ Workshop, Crisfield** – This attractive site, recently restored, is interpreted just as the decoy makers and woodcarvers left it. It should be open on a more regular basis and is in need of signs directing visitors to the site. It is

also a fragile site within a residential neighborhood on a narrow road, so it may be desirable to keep visitors in check.. Outdoor interpretation would be highly valuable here, because many visitors arrive after hours. This site could be the “anchor” for a driving tour from Crisfield, possibly using step-on guides as well as a self-guided brochure.

**West Side Heritage Museum**, Mardela Springs, Wicomico County – This newly established museum occupies rental space in a nineteenth-century store. The museum may be able to support the establishment and operation of a regional interpretive and orientation center as it seeks to establish permanent space. The West Side Historical Society also owns the 1840 Barren Creek Presbyterian Church.

### **Other Interpretive Programming – Phase 1**

**Adkins Historical and Museum Complex**, Mardela Springs, Wicomico County – Seek museum planning assistance to develop a long-term strategy for the management and interpretation of this site. Incorporate planning for village interpretation into this work. As one of two interpretive sites in the first Lower Eastern Shore village encountered by visitors, it deserves early attention.

**Boulevard Center for the Performing Arts**, Salisbury, Wicomico County – The City’s plans for a major performing arts center would benefit the heritage area by the addition of an interpretive exhibit in the lobby and more performance space for works related to the area’s cultural heritage. The exhibit could relate this new center not only to the specific site’s history as a movie theater but also to the history of the performing arts throughout the Lower Eastern Shore. “Recreation and renewal” is an under-interpreted thematic topic. The facility could also include public art that interprets local history in a proposed park between the Chipman Center and the Boulevard Center.

**Deal Island**, Somerset County – See discussion of future Target Investment Areas in Chapter 6 (Economic Development and Targeted Investment).

**Fairmount Academy**, Upper Fairmount, Somerset County – Install interpretive sign relating this site to the “Peoples and Settlement” theme. Create interpretation such as actors in historical costume, storytellers, and schoolchildren’s contests to add to the site’s annual Strawberry Festival.

**Whitehaven Ferry and Village**, Wicomico County – One of the nation’s oldest continually operating ferries is located here, carrying a maximum of three vehicles at a time. A nineteenth-century hotel is currently being restored for use as a bed-and-breakfast; it is the second to be opened in the village. A school is preserved and interpreted, although open on a limited basis, and one church is open to visitors by appointment. A walking tour would allow visitors a peaceful

stroll around the small village streets. Additional promotion beyond a walking tour, however, should be considered carefully.

Considering the lack of parking, the closely built streets, the largely residential nature of the village, and the lack of commercial spaces for visitor amenities, this village qualifies as especially fragile in the face of too much tourism. One of the most beautifully preserved villages on the Eastern Shore, it may be best as a surprise encounter for visitors intrigued by the history and romance of the ferry and attracted by the two bed-and-breakfasts or the nearby Red Roost seafood restaurant.

### **Enhancement of Existing Interpretive Sites – Phase 2**

The following sites need additional planning for interpretation and operation, or help in expanding their interpretation to address the regional interpretive system for the Lower Eastern Shore. Some may work as Local Visitor Information Centers or operate in tandem with other local initiatives, as described in Chapter 3, Orientation and Linkages.

#### **Somerset County**

Littleton Long House, Princess Anne

#### **Wicomico County**

Barren Creek Presbyterian Church, Mardela Springs

Delmar Railroad Museum, Delmar

Excel Interactive Science Museum, Salisbury

Nutter's Election House, Fruitland

Passerdyke Cottage, Allen

Rockawalkin School House, Salisbury

Winter Place Park, Salisbury

#### **Worcester County**

Barnes Bank Museum, Girdletree

Costen House Museum, Pocomoke City

Merry Sherwood Plantation, Berlin

Mt. Zion One Room School, Snow Hill

Queponco Railway Station, Newark

Sturgis One Room School Museum, Pocomoke City

### **Creation of New Interpretive Sites – Phase 2**

The sites listed below need additional planning for potential incorporation into a regional interpretive system for the Lower Eastern Shore.

**Early Americana Collection**, formerly of Hudson's Corner, Somerset County  
– Large collection of agricultural implements, antique furniture, and other historic

artifacts, recently willed to Somerset County, which is now seeking a way of creating appropriate cataloging, storage, and display.

**Double Mills**, Mardela Springs, Wicomico County – The West Side Historical Society is considering acquiring (by donation) the Double Mill (so named because a second mill once stood on the other side of Barren Creek to take advantage of existing water power). The last mill standing in the region, it would be a good place to tell the (untold) story of agriculture in the region.

**Watermen’s Museum**, Nanticoke, Wicomico County – The small village of Nanticoke possesses a collection of watermen’s artifacts and wishes to create local history museum. The Nanticoke River has a devoted following of river enthusiasts, primarily concerned about protection the river’s environs, but they may be an indication of volunteer strength in the area that could support a small museum.

**Mar-Va Theater**, Pocomoke City, Worcester County – This site has a devoted following of preservationists seeking to revitalize this theater, built about 1930. It is located between the proposed site of the Pocomoke River Discovery Center and the Sturgis Memorial One Room School at one end of Main Street, and the Costen House museum at the other end. All are comfortable walking distance from one another.

**Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**  
Chapter 4 – Interpretation and Education

**Table 4.2a Existing and Future Interpretive Resources Analyzed by Interpretive Themes – Somerset County**

Interpretive Resource	Focus	Interpretive Themes					
		LNBR	RR	SS	PS	EL	MNH
<b>Crisfield</b>							
1 Crisfield Historical Museum/Tawes Library	Local history; life of Governor Tawes and the Ward Brothers				●	●	
2 Janes Island Water Trail	Janes Island and marshes	●	●	●			
3 <i>Jenkins Creek Environmental Center</i>	<i>Environmental education</i>	●	●	●			
4 Walking tour (brochure)	Local history; including 19 buildings				●	●	
5 Ward Brothers' Workshop	Life of the Ward Brothers, famed decoy carvers and artists	●	●	●	●		
<b>Deal Island / Wenona</b>							
6 <i>Skipjack Museum</i>	<i>History of Maryland's state boat</i>	●		●	●	●	
<b>Marion</b>							
7 Accohannock Tribal Museum	American Indian culture			?	●	●	
8 <i>Bending Water Park (Accohannocks)</i>	<i>Museum and recreated American Indian village, classes, early farming</i>	●		●	●	●	
9 <i>Early Americana Collection</i>	<i>Early American artifacts</i>				●	●	
<b>Princess Anne</b>							
10 Littleton Long House	1829 Greek Revival house				●	●	
11 Walking tour brochure	Local history, including 38 buildings				●	●	
12 Somerset County Visitor Information Center	Information about regional attractions and services	●	●	●	●	●	●
13 Teackle Mansion	Elaborate Federal-style house, 1802 and 1818-19				●	●	●
<b>Smith Island</b>							
14 Martin National Wildlife Refuge	Operated as a satellite of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge	●	●	●			
15 Mullins Education Center (Chesapeake Bay Foundation)	Environmental education	●	●	●			
16 Walking tour brochure	Local history, including 27 buildings				●	●	●
17 Smith Island Center	Culture and lifestyle of islanders	●		●	●	●	
18 Smith Island Crabmeat Co-op	Tours of operating plant	●		●	●	●	
<b>Upper Fairmount</b>							
19 Fairmount Academy	Operated as school 1839-1969				●		

Key: LNBR-Living, Natural Bays and Rivers    RR-Recreation and Renewal    SS-Stewardship and Sustainability  
 PS-Peoples and Settlement    EL-Economic Livelihood    MNH-Military and Naval Heritage

Numbers reference location of resources on maps.  
 "Future" sites are indicated by the use of italics.



**Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**  
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**Table 4.2b Existing and Future Interpretive Resources Analyzed by Interpretive Themes – Wicomico County**

Interpretive Resource	Focus	Interpretive Themes					
		LNBR	RR	SS	PS	EL	MNH
<b>Allen</b>							
20 Passerdyke Cottage	Headquarters of Allen Historical Society				●		
21 Walking/driving tour, Allen	History of Allen		●		●	●	
<b>Delmar</b>							
22 Delmar Railroad Museum	Delmar's history as a railroad town; housed in a caboose				●	●	
<b>Hebron</b>							
23 Chesapeake Fire Museum	Fire equipment				●		
<b>Mardela Springs</b>							
24 Adkins Historical and Museum Complex	Eight buildings interpreting regional life				●	●	
25 <i>Double Mills</i>	<i>History of Eastern Shore agriculture and milling</i>				●	●	
26 West Side Heritage Museum	Local history collection housed in late 19th-century store; society also owns 1840 Barren Creek Presbyterian Church		●		●	●	
<b>Nanticoke</b>							
27 <i>Waterman's Museum</i>	<i>Traditions and culture of watermen</i>	●		●	●	●	
<b>Parsonsborg</b>							
28 Wicomico Demonstration Forest	Natural resources education; trails; birding	●	●	●		●	
<b>Salisbury</b>							
29 <i>Boulevard Center for the Performing Arts</i>	<i>1930s movie theater, exhibits in lobby</i>		●		●		
30 Charles H. Chipman Cultural Center	Civic organization housed in 1838 church				●	●	
31 Edward H. Nabb Center for Delmarva Culture at Salisbury Univ.	Local history, culture, and genealogy				●	●	
32 Excel Interactive Science Museum	Science museum	●		●			
33 Pemberton Historical Park	1741 Hall interprets 18th-century plantation life; Wicomico Heritage Center interprets county heritage; five miles of nature trails	●	●	●	●	●	●
34 Poplar Hill Mansion	1795-1805 house with period furnishings				●	●	
35 Rockawalkin School	Restored 1872 school, operated through 1938				●		
36 Salisbury Zoo	Animals and habitat from North, Central, and South America	●	●	●			
37 Walking tour, downtown (brochure)	Local history, including 29 buildings				●	●	
38 Walking tour, Newtown (brochure)	Local history, including 30 buildings				●	●	
39 Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art	Wildfowl art (decoys), environment, Ward Brothers' workshop	●	●	●	●		
40 Wicomico County Visitor Information Center	Information about regional attractions and services	●	●	●	●	●	●
41 <i>Winter Place Park</i>	<i>Site of Purdue Family Homestead, interpreted through archeology; bridle paths</i>		●		●	●	
<b>Western Wicomico County</b>							
42 <i>U.S. Route 50 Visitor Information Center (unnamed)</i>	<i>Information about regional attractions and services</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Whitehaven</b>							
43 Whitehaven Ferry and Village	18th- and 19th-century village with restored school (church and inn are also open to public)	●	●	●	●	●	?
44 Walking tour brochure	Local history				●	●	

**Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**  
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**Table 4.2c Existing and Future Interpretive Resources Analyzed by Interpretive Themes – Worcester County**

Interpretive Resource	Focus	Interpretive Themes					
		LNBR	RR	SS	PS	EL	MNH
<b>Assateague Island</b>							
45 <i>Coastal Bays Learning Lab</i>	<i>Environmental education</i>	●					
46 Assateague Island National Seashore ( <i>Barrier Island Center to be improved</i> )	Beach; camping; ponies	●					
47 Sinepuxent Bay Water Trails (brochure)	Two trail loops, plus information on natural resources	●					
48 Assateague State Park	Resource management and recreation	●	●				
<b>Berlin</b>							
49 Calvin B. Taylor House Museum	1832 home; Berlin's town museum				●	●	
50 Mariners' Country Down and Store	Crafts; furniture; dining	●			●	●	
51 Merry Sherwood Plantation	1859 Italianate mansion				●	●	
52 Walking Tour	Local history, events, and 19 buildings				●	●	
<b>Bishop</b>							
53 <i>U.S. Route 113 Visitor Information Center</i>	<i>Information about regional attractions and services</i>						
<b>Girdletree</b>							
54 Barnes Bank Museum	Small 1876 bank				●	●	
<b>Newark</b>							
55 Queponco Railway Station	Small 1910 station				●	●	
<b>Ocean City</b>							
56 Life Saving Station Museum	1891 building; history of lifesaving	●	(●)				
57 Walking tour brochure	Local history		●		●	●	
<b>Pocomoke City</b>							
58 Costen House Museum	1870 doctor's home; includes garden				●	●	
59 <i>Mar-Va Theater</i>	<i>1927 Art Deco theater; segregated facilities</i>				●	●	
60 <i>Pocomoke River Discovery Center</i>	<i>Natural resources education and recreation</i>	●	●	●		●	
61 Maryland Welcome Center on U.S. 13	Information about regional attractions and services	●	●	●	●	●	●
62 Sturgis One-Room School Museum	1900 African-American school				●	●	
63 Walking tour brochure	Local history						
<b>Snow Hill and vicinity</b>							
64 Bogiron Water Trails (brochure)	Pocomoke River and Nassawango Creek	●			●	●	
65 Walking tour brochure	History and description of 63 buildings				●	●	
66 Julia A. Purnell Museum	County historical museum with artifacts from 1850 to 1950, including needlework				●	●	
67 Mt. Zion One Room School	1869 school used until 1931				●	●	
68 Furnace Town	1840s iron-making village	●		●	●	●	?
69 Nassawango Nature Preserve	Adjacent to Furnace Town	●		●			

Key: LNBR-Living, Natural Bays and Rivers    RR-Recreation and Renewal    SS-Stewardship and Sustainability  
PS-Peoples and Settlement    EL-Economic Livelihood    MNH-Military and Naval Heritage

Numbers reference location of resources on maps.  
"Future" sites are indicated by the use of italics.

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**Table 4.2d Existing and Future Interpretive Resources Analyzed by Interpretive Themes – Regional**

Interpretive Resource	Focus	Interpretive Themes					
		LNBR	RR	SS	PS	EL	MNH
<b>Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties</b>							
<i>Audio tours</i>	<i>Cultural traditions and sites of interest</i>	?	●	?	●	●	?
<i>Ocean Highway National Scenic Byway (proposed)</i>	<i>Regional history and sites of interest</i>	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>Somerset and Worcester Counties</b>							
Beach to Bay Indian Trail (National Recreational Trail)	Regional history and sites of interest	●	●	●	●	●	●

Key: LNBR-Living, Natural Bays and Rivers    RR-Recreation and Renewal    SS-Stewardship and Sustainability  
 PS-Peoples and Settlement    EL-Economic Livelihood    MNH-Military and Naval Heritage

Numbers reference location of resources on maps.  
 "Future" sites are indicated by the use of italics.

**Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**  
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**Table 4.4 Periods of History Interpreted by Selected Sites in the Lower Eastern Shore**

**Somerset County**

Location	Interpretive Resource	Major Period (Century)			Focus
		18th	19th	20th	
Crisfield	Crisfield Historical Museum/Tawes Library	●	●	●	Local history; life of Governor Tawes and the Ward Brothers; rotating exhibits
Crisfield	Ward Brothers' Workshop			●	Life of the Ward Brothers, famed decoy carvers and artists
Princess Anne	Teackle Mansion		●		Elaborate Federal-style house, 1802 and 1818-19
Smith Island	Smith Island Cultural Center	●	●	●	Culture and lifestyle of islanders

**Wicomico County**

Location	Interpretive Resource	Major Period (Century)			Focus
		18th	19th	20th	
Mardela Springs	Adkins Historical and Museum Complex		●	●	Eight buildings interpreting regional life
Mardela Springs	West Side Heritage Museum		●	●	Local history collection housed in late 19th c. store; society also owns 1840 Barren Creek Presbyterian Church
Salisbury	Pemberton Historical Park (Including Pemberton Hall and Wicomico Heritage Center)	●			1741 Hall interprets 18th c. plantation life; Wicomico Heritage Center interprets county heritage; five miles of nature trails
Salisbury	Poplar Hill Mansion		●		1795-1805 house with period woodwork and furnishings
Salisbury	Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art			●	Wildfowl art (decoys), environment, Ward Brothers' workshop, rotating exhibits
Whitehaven	Whitehaven Ferry and Village	●	●		18th- and 19th-century village with restored school (church and inn are also open to the public)

**Worcester County**

Location	Interpretive Resource	Major Period (Century)			Focus
		18th	19th	20th	
Berlin	Merry Sherwood Plantation		●		1859 Italianate mansion
Girdletree	Barnes Bank Museum		●		Small 1876 bank
Newark	Queponco Railway Station			●	Small 1910 station
Ocean City	Life Saving Station Museum		●	●	1891 building; history of lifesaving, rotating exhibits
Pocomoke City	Costen House Museum		●		1870 doctor's home; includes garden
Snow Hill	Julia A. Purnell Museum		●	●	County historical museum with artifacts from 1850 to 1950; also needlework
Snow Hill	Mt. Zion One Room School		●		1869 school used until 1931
Snow Hill (vicinity)	Furnace Town		●		1840s iron-making village

## Chapter 5 Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services

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Ocean City Boardwalk, Worcester County

# Chapter 5

## **Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services**

### **Introduction**

Chapter 5 concentrates on the economic results that the entire planning process is meant to achieve through tourism. Increasing visitation will help Lower Eastern Shore towns and interpretive sites to attract more investment. Such investment is critical to maintaining the economic vitality and thus the preservation of these historic places.

The Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) states that “heritage areas are a promising approach to revitalization. [They combine] heritage tourism and small business development with preservation, cultural conservation, recreation, natural resource conservation, and education in a strategic effort to enhance a community’s economic activity.” Accordingly, many of the MHAA goals cited in Chapter 1 relate to heritage tourism. The MHAA requires this plan to provide information and ideas relating to heritage tourism in two primary ways. As stated in the MHAA guidelines:

**Market Analysis for Heritage Tourism** – “An inventory of visitor services within the heritage area and its general vicinity, and an analysis of the present and future market for existing and enhanced tourism experiences. Visitor services include accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, shopping and other services useful to tourists.”

**Strategies for Achieving Optimum Visitation** – “A thorough market analysis that identifies target markets and niches, and a strategic marketing plan for effectively reaching priority markets. If the proposed heritage area is already experiencing significant tourism activity, [the plan should] provide strategies for balancing the impact of visitors on local quality of life. If the present tourism is strongly seasonal, provide strategies for extending the season. If the area is already a strong tourism ‘attraction,’ please discuss the issue of ‘carrying capacity.’ Will this initiative add more tourists than is appropriate for the overall quality of life?”

## **Heritage Tourism**

Planning, developing, and managing tourism are logical outgrowths of a community's investment in interpretation. Enhanced interpretation lays the groundwork for tourism development, particularly heritage tourism. As the stories and themes of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area become more available and accessible, they will attract new visitors who are interested in authentic and unique history – respectfully told.

Travel is one of the world's largest industries. Travel-related expenditures contribute billions of dollars to the United States economy. Nationally, tourism is the number one industry in seventeen states and ranks second or third in the remainder. Until the recent economic downturn in the travel industry, international travel had seen a steady rise. In the late 1990s, the World Tourism Organization anticipated that 1.6 billion international visitors would arrive annually in the United States by 2020 – triple the level seen in the 1990s. Although the global economy has slowed, tourism is expected to recover in the near future. In the current economic climate, heritage areas may actually have an advantage over other destinations, because Americans have begun to show greater interest in domestic travel.

New trends in tourism have contributed to the success of heritage development. Demographic studies show that the number of people over fifty-five years of age is increasing steadily. Members of this group often possess the financial resources and time for leisure travel. People below the age of fifty-five continue to travel, but time constraints often limit families, couples, and individuals to shorter, long weekend trips nearer to home. A study prepared by the United States Travel and Data Center revealed that 45 percent of adults planning a trip for pleasure said that they intended to visit a historic site while on vacation. Heritage is becoming a considerable draw for tourism.

Heritage tourists can be characterized as well educated, mature, and moderately affluent. They are interested in doing “something different,” learning about a new place, and experiencing a way of life that differs from their own. Areas of interest include experiencing regional architecture, landscapes, cuisine, and social customs. Heritage travelers are truly appreciative of good interpretation and sites with genuine character – while demanding high quality experiences. They stay, on average, a half-day longer than other tourists, thereby boosting a region's potential to generate additional revenue.

However, in order for heritage development to succeed, regions must vigorously protect their cultural and natural resources, create a critical mass of quality attractions, provide business owners with technical support, and selectively target public investment where it will have the greatest impact. Heritage areas must

also provide visitor information in the form of signs, maps, and brochures, link sites in an appealing way, and continue to improve the quality of regional amenities, such as accommodations, restaurants, and stores.

Small towns are beginning to play larger roles in the United States tourism industry as travelers increasingly seek out new and novel destinations. Until recently, the countryside has been considered to be a pass-through area rather than a destination unto itself, but now additional efforts are being made to tap the tourism potential of rural areas using integrated regional strategies. Rural areas offer active recreational opportunities such as hiking, unique educational opportunities such as farm tours, and special retail enterprises such as pick-your-own produce and handmade crafts. Small businesses comprise 98 percent of rural, travel-related enterprises. Success often depends on the availability of marketing and business development assistance.



The River House Inn Bed & Breakfast in Snow Hill is one of several B&Bs in this riverside community. Immediately behind the inn, guests can paddle their canoes on the Pocomoke River. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

## **Market Analysis for Heritage Tourism**

### **Methodology**

The first step in completing a tourism assessment for the Lower Eastern Shore was the analysis of tourism marketing materials in each of the three counties. The consulting team reviewed web sites, brochures, rack cards, and other printed materials in an effort to understand how well they describe the area. Research in secondary sources plus examination of the marketing materials shows who is visiting the heritage area today, who is being attracted by the communities, and what impact these visitors are having on the region. For instance, research revealed the magnitude of golf's impact on the Ocean City economy. Following this first level of data-gathering, the consulting team met with tourism professionals from the region in Ocean City in January 2001 to clarify tourism issues and opportunities.



## **Regional Advantages for Heritage Tourism**

The nature and impact of tourism varies across the three counties. Ocean City is one of the major tourism destinations on the East Coast, attracting millions of visitors each year to its gleaming Atlantic beaches, cool breezes, and plentiful views of the ocean and bay. It attracts a high proportion of regional visitors and has an ample supply of overnight accommodations, dining opportunities, and shopping. Ocean City visitors are an important market for tourism in the other parts of the Lower Eastern Shore. Millions of visitors might be persuaded to add to their beach or golf vacation by traveling through the three counties. Berlin, a scant eight miles away, has clearly benefited from its proximity to this market.

Beyond Ocean City, unique tourism resources offer visitors a chance to experience a splendid, fragile landscape. The Assateague Island National Seashore (together with the state park) is a major natural attraction. The story of the region's natural heritage is also told in trails and preserves for boating, biking, hiking, and birding. The region is rich with these opportunities. The experiences of American Indians, African Americans, and European settlers in the region hold interesting stories for many visitors.

Throughout the three counties, there are many historic and natural resources that could attract heritage tourists, especially those in Ocean City who might be curious to see the rest of the Lower Eastern Shore for a day. Attracting significant numbers to venture outside Ocean City to see these sites, however, is a formidable task. Packaging and other kinds of marketing are key to convincing these visitors to explore the region's other attractions. This chapter examines some of the possibilities for developing the tourism in the region as a whole.

## **Regional Visitation, Regional Patterns**

Visitation statistics for the three counties are currently quite weak. Since no major statistical studies are done routinely at the regional or county level, current estimates of county visitation are tenuous at best. Having solid, reliable numbers on which to judge the effectiveness of the promotional work done for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area is important. A system to track visitation more precisely is a critical need. This involves not simply counting visitors (although that is useful) but understanding where they are from, what interests them, and how they learned about the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. From such information and feedback, it is possible to gain insights that will enable improvements in both the region's offerings and its marketing.

The three counties of the Lower Eastern Shore appear to have dramatically differing levels of tourist visitation. Somerset County reported 200,000 visitors based on counts completed in 2000. Wicomico has a large base of overnight accommodations situated on the two major roads through the Lower Eastern

Shore. Based on educated estimates for such important variables as occupancy, party size, and length of stay, the likely overnight visitation to the county is just over half a million. Another half a million visitors may stop briefly while passing through (this number is pure speculation based on the sizable resource of fast food restaurants along the highways).

Worcester County clearly dominates the region because of visitation to Ocean City, but various means of making estimates provide widely varying numbers for day and overnight visitors (an indicator of a unique tourism market for which ordinary statistical measures may be insufficient). Information available was insufficient to resolve significant differences, so estimates are not included here, but it seems safe to assume that minimum visitation to the region is more than five million day and overnight visitors, and possibly 50 to 70 percent greater than that.

Overnight visitors to Ocean City, and by extension the region, are heavily concentrated during the summer months. An expansion of golfing in recent years in Worcester County has begun to enlarge visitation there in the two “shoulder” seasons, spring and fall. Many Ocean City visitors are repeat visitors, year after year, who may prove to be a good market for the entire region because they so readily travel there already.

As one further insight into patterns of visitation in the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area, the Maryland Office of Tourism Development states that:

“The Eastern Shore has the longest average trip duration of any other region. The average household stay is 3.0 nights, 20 percent higher than the state average. Fifty-seven percent of visitors to the Eastern Shore stayed in paid accommodations, the highest of all the regions. Given the longer stays and high use of paid accommodations, it is no surprise then to see that the Eastern Shore also has the highest average household trip expenditures. At \$385 per household, trip expenditures in the Eastern Shore are 28 percent higher than the state average.” [Source: 2000 Annual Report of the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, 2001, p. 6. Data for this statement collected by TravelScope.]

A means of demonstrating the magnitude and variation in visitation to the three counties of the Lower Eastern Shore is to make use of the numbers provided by the U.S. Travel Data Center of the Travel Industry Association of America to the Maryland Office of Tourism Development (Table 5.1). These are numbers that have been collected for many years, and for that reason are good proxies for visitation. As they are based on nationwide sampling and count only visitors from more than 50 miles away or those staying overnight, and have been assembled over many years, they are perhaps better proxies for growth in tourism.

This is how they are generally used, as indicators to help measure performance over time in the tourism industry. Although these data are for travel and tourism overall, not simply leisure travel, for the Lower Eastern Shore tourism is almost all undertaken for pleasure (golf, sight-seeing, heritage, beach, boating, fishing, etc.).

**Table 5.1 Tourism Indicators and Impacts in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, 1999**

<b>County</b>	<b>Expenditures (millions)*</b>	<b>Payroll (millions)</b>	<b>Employment (thousands)</b>	<b>State Tax Receipts (millions)</b>	<b>Local Tax Receipts (millions)</b>
Somerset	9.57	2.26	0.10	0.45	0.88
Wicomico	150.38	46.44	1.79	4.97	4.09
Worcester and Ocean City	931.54	262.46	13.99	47.93	56.68
Lower Eastern Shore	1,091.49	311.16	15.88	53.35	61.65
All 9 Eastern Shore Counties	1,369.76	384.73	19.66	66.75	77.12
Maryland	7,722.29	2,277.24	103.51	347.41	299.08

*Source: "The Economic Impact of Travel on Maryland Counties – 1999," March 2001 report by the U.S. Travel Data Center for the Maryland Office of Tourism Development; Watson Heritage Strategies (\*Includes transportation, lodging, food, entertainment and recreation, and incidentals)*

Table 5.1 provides information about travelers' expenditures in the three Lower Eastern Shore counties, and related data concerning payroll, employment, state tax revenue, and local tax revenue. Table 5.2 shows two taxes specifically related to tourism (numbers for tax receipts overall in Table 5.1 derive from data that include such other taxes as corporate and sales taxes). Both show dramatic differences from Worcester to Somerset County, with Wicomico squarely in between. If Somerset's visitation is 200,000 and the impact of that visitation is a fraction of Worcester's or Wicomico's, then the two "larger" counties have vastly greater visitation.

**Table 5.2 Tourism-Related Tax Revenues in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, FY 2001**

<b>County</b>	<b>Hotel/motel tax revenue</b>	<b>Hotel/motel tax rate</b>	<b>Amusement and admission tax revenue</b>
Somerset	\$40,803	3%	\$33,288
Wicomico	\$643,941	5%	\$408,387
Worcester and Ocean City	\$6,964,507	4%	\$1,723,297
Lower Eastern Shore	\$7,649,251		\$2,164,972
All 9 Eastern Shore Counties	\$8,623,280		\$2,971,872

*Source: 2000 Annual Report of the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, issued 2001, "County Grant and Tax Fact Sheet FY2001," p. 20; Watson Heritage Strategies*

Table 5.3 provides figures for present local government investment in tourism offices and marketing, which are critical activities helping to bring visitors to the area, supported by the state's own marketing. These investments have accompanied growth of visitor expenditures in the region in recent years. Although Somerset ranked last among the state's counties and municipalities in 1999 in terms of the tourist dollars spent there (Table 5.1), it was the top-ranked county in terms of the growth in such dollars from 1998 to 1999 (the latest data available). In fact, it was one of only three counties in 1999 to exceed the rates of growth in the state as a whole in all measures shown in Table 5.1 (the other two were Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's Counties). Wicomico and Worcester are already close to the top (ninth and third, respectively, in 1999) so that even large absolute increases do not result in "high percentage" increases. They also saw increased visitor spending from 1998 to 1999, ranking 17th and 14th respectively in the amount of that increase compared to all other Maryland jurisdictions (22 counties and Baltimore City). [Source: "The Economic Impact of Travel on Maryland Counties – 1999," March 2001 report by the U. S. Travel Data Center for the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, p. 10.

**Table 5.3 Tourism Budgets in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**

<b>County</b>	<b>Local Government Expenditures</b>
Somerset	\$202,477
Wicomico	\$538,608
Worcester and Ocean City	\$2,700,298
Lower Eastern Shore	\$3,441,383
All 9 Eastern Shore Counties	\$4,780,080

*Source: 2000 Annual Report of the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, issued 2001, "County Grant and Tax Fact Sheet FY2001," p. 20; Watson Heritage Strategies*

### **Expenditures by Visitors and the Impacts of their Spending**

Perhaps the most important way of tracking the effectiveness of promoting tourism to the communities of the Lower Eastern Shore outside of Ocean City are the numbers available from the state shown in Tables 5.1 and 5.2. While these data are reliable, they do not help much with measuring success and adjusting plans in the short run. In keeping with the recommendation above concerning the measurement of annual visitation, "just in time" tracking of expenditures in each county (Worcester County outside of Ocean City) would provide a reliable benchmark to measure growth and improvement in tourism over time. (Such data are among the performance measures that must be provided to the MHAA annually; see Chapter 8, Management.)

The impact of these dollars in the region is significant. In the employment figures, it is apparent that the tourism industry is a major source of employment on the Lower Eastern Shore, amounting to almost 16,000 jobs in 1999 (the latest year for which data are available). This is direct employment; businesses that are not themselves tourism-based, but which serve tourism businesses (such as the printer who publishes menus and brochures), also are a source of employment that benefits from tourism. Statewide, it is estimated that every dollar spent by a domestic traveler to Maryland produces 29 cents in wage and salary income for Maryland residents. [Source: "The Economic Impact of Travel on Maryland Counties – 1999."] That figure is only a fraction less in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, 28.5 cents, even though the public transportation industry constitutes nearly a third of that 29 cents statewide (an industry with a much smaller impact in this region).

Local government revenues include a significant amount of tax receipts from tourism. Statewide the travel dollar produced more than 3.9 cents in local tax receipts [Source: "The Economic Impact of Travel on Maryland Counties – 1999," p. 14.]. Here in the Lower Eastern Shore counties, that figure is greater,

more than 5.6 cents. Combined with the generally lower local government budgets in this region compared to the state (a function of the smaller population among other factors), that figure indicates that this region is more reliant on tourism to support local government services. It must be borne in mind, however, that these generalizations do not take account of the concentration of dollars in Worcester County and more specifically Ocean City. Broken down, the local tax yield in Somerset is 9.2 cents on the dollar, Wicomico 2.7, and Worcester, 6.1.

### **Carrying Capacity: Encouraging More Site Visitation**

In drawing up plans for the future of tourism in the region, the issue of capacity must be addressed. Some sites can handle only a few visitors because they have limited numbers of volunteers to open them, or because they are quite small, like the Mt. Zion Schoolhouse and Julia Purnell Museum, both in Snow Hill. The schoolhouse, like many other sites throughout the region, is open one day a week. The Julia Purnell Museum is open more days but barely able to accommodate a busload at one time. On the other hand, sites such as Furnace Town, which handles 18,000 visitors per year, have the capacity to serve many more – easily more than double its visitation, according to the director, with no change in staffing or maintenance. The same is true of others that have achieved being open five days or more a week, most seasons of the year. The Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, which serves 69,000 visitors on a yearly budget of \$850,000, may be able to serve as many as double that number for little change in the budget.

Some sites not open now might open more with increased demand. How much activity does a site need to warrant being open every day, in multiple seasons? In answering this question for any site, it is important to remember that gate fees do not go far in an organization's budget. Creative funding is required. Many sites in the region receive some governmental support in recognition of their contribution to tourism and public education. Volunteers, on whom most sites in the region rely, can only go so far in keeping the doors open.

Sites estimated to have the highest visitation include the Ward Museum (69,000), the Salisbury Zoo (214,000), and Furnace Town



Furnace Town is a Worcester County site that focuses on the history of the Nassawango Iron Furnace and the life of early European settlers in the region. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

(18,000). [Source: The Official Museum Directory, 2001, American Association of Museums.] For the sake of comparison, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum averaged almost 96,000 over 1998, 1999, and 2000. The Maritime Museum is easily the Eastern Shore's most popular museum destination. It is located outside the region in St. Michaels, Talbot County. [Source: Telephone conversation with CBMM development director Debra D. Davis, November 12, 2001.] For smaller sites, there is little concern for negative impacts of tourism; to the contrary, greater visitation can only benefit these sites.

Tourism in communities, however, may be another matter. These are communities laid out and built largely without the car in mind. The problems of where to put cars and how to manage their impacts on pedestrian access and community quality of life are problems many of these communities face when they host festivals and events drawing large numbers of people. Attracting many automobiles in large numbers would spoil the visitor experience, not to mention residents' quality of life. Whitehaven is perhaps the most fragile site attracting automobile-based tourists today (see discussion in a later section). Public transportation, either routine or temporary shuttle (or some kind of seasonal combination) is the answer to this difficulty for most communities, but it requires planning and funding. Fortunately, the communities that stand to gain the greatest increase in visitors in the early years, Snow Hill and Pocomoke City (because they are readily accessible and close to the more highly utilized areas in Worcester County and Ocean City), are already discussing the possibility of collaborating on transit with Berlin and Ocean City (see Chapter 3).

## **Tourism Infrastructure**

The tourism infrastructure in Ocean City is impressive, but the infrastructure in the rest of the region is much more modest. The advantage in this, however, is that tourism elsewhere is not limited by a lack of infrastructure, a common problem in more rural regions attempting to develop their tourism.

### **Accommodations**

Obviously, to have tourists stay in the area for more than a day, an area must offer overnight accommodations. Tourists with different travel patterns and habits look for different types of accommodations. Tourists primarily interested in heritage tourism seem to prefer bed-and-breakfast lodging (B&B's) or unique inns. Those interested in nature tourism may also want upscale lodging options with comfortable accommodations and service; others may prefer camping. The three-county region offers a variety of different lodgings (Table 5.4). Worcester County figures do not include Ocean City, which is listed separately.

Ocean City accounts for the greatest number of accommodations, with more than 100 properties available to tourists there. This constitutes a major resource for the remainder of the region as tourism grows in all three counties, providing a supply of lodging before it can be developed in other advantageous locations.

**Table 5.4 Lodging in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**  
 (Properties/Rooms)

Type	Somerset	Wicomico	Worcester	Ocean City
Full-Service Hotels	0/0	1/163	1/16	97
Motels	6/163	12/1,238	2/151	
B&Bs and Inns	11/37	2/14	7/44	No data
Total Lodgings	17/200	19/1,395	10/211	No data

*Source: Davidson-Peterson Associates, from local advertising and county marketing materials, June 2001.*

The Wicomico resource is modest but probably has room for more tourists to visit – especially during the shoulder seasons. Worcester County beyond Ocean City, Wicomico County beyond Salisbury, and Somerset County have quite modest overnight accommodation availability consisting of only about 300 rooms. Note, however, that these areas have the bulk of the B&Bs available in the Lower Eastern Shore region.

Ocean City also has a significant rental market for apartments, condominiums, and cottages. Judging from local marketing information (web sites and brochures), there are at least 22 apartment and condominium properties that rent directly to visitors, and 15 realtors and real estate companies that rent beach properties of all kinds to the public. More specifically, there are approximately 8,960 condo units and apartments available for rent in Ocean City out of a total of about 25,000 housing units.

## **Camping**

Camping opportunities are many here (Table 5.5). Data from the state suggest that camping is not a large portion of the use of accommodations. Three percent of visitors to the Eastern Shore as a whole arrived via camper or recreational vehicle (RV) in 2000; statewide, the use of RV/tent camping increased by 26.3 percent in 2000 over 1999, from 1.9 percent of visitors to 2.4 percent. On the Eastern Shore, RV/camping is a slightly greater share of visitor accommodation, 2.6 percent in 2000, a number that declined 52.7 percent from the previous year's number, 5.5 percent.



**Table 5.5 Camping Accommodations in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Number of Campgrounds</b>	<b>Number of Camping Sites</b>
Somerset County	3	317
Wicomico County	3	159 [approx.]
Worcester County	9	1709 [approx.]
Ocean City	1	200
Lower Eastern Shore	16	[2,385]

*Source: Watson Heritage Strategies, from advertising and county marketing materials, January 2002. (\*Does not include backcountry camping at Assateague Island National Seashore; includes 2 campgrounds each at the national seashore and Pocomoke River State Forest and Park.)*

That said, however, the campgrounds are often filled to capacity in the warmer months, and they offer employment and private business opportunities for residents of the region. Frontier Town Campground in Worcester County (in West Ocean City) is one of the nation’s largest and most highly rated within the nationwide camping industry. It accommodates approximately 50,000 campers a year in its 500 sites, and reservations must be made months in advance. There are 10 other privately operated sites in the region. There are also four popular state park campgrounds, at Assateague Island, Janes Island, and two locations in the Pocomoke River State Forest plus two campgrounds (beachside, bayside) at the Assateague Island National Seashore, not counting permit-only backcountry camping.

## **Restaurants**

In order to meet the needs of tourists visiting an area, restaurants must be available for a variety of dining experiences. Heritage tourists – and probably those visiting the area for nature tourism – are likely to want to experience local cuisine. In the Lower Eastern Shore that is clearly seafood of one type or another – especially crabs. Seafood restaurants abound in the region though most are found in Ocean City.

**Table 5.6 Restaurants in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**

<b>Cuisine</b>	<b>Somerset</b>	<b>Wicomico</b>	<b>Worcester</b>	<b>Ocean City</b>
American/ Continental	3	10	4	43
Seafood	5	12	5	40
Italian	2	15	-	7
Mexican	-	4	-	5
Family	2	12	2	3
Chinese	2	10	-	12
Deli/bagelry	-	7	-	-
Not identified	5	-	5	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>72</b>

*Source: Davidson-Peterson Associates, from local advertising and county marketing materials, June 2001. Note: Totals are not sums as some restaurants serve more than one cuisine; figures do not include fast-food and takeout restaurants*

**Somerset County** – Crisfield has ten restaurants, many specializing in seafood. Princess Anne has five restaurants and there are three others scattered around the county. Fast food restaurants are also prevalent in several areas.

**Wicomico County** – In addition to fast food restaurants, Salisbury has 66 restaurants. Seafood (12), family dining (12), Italian (15), and Chinese (10) are the most popular cuisines. Two gourmet restaurants are also available. The Red Roost Crab House near Whitehaven and Old Mill Crab House in Delmar offer local crab specialties.

**Worcester County** – Ocean City boasts many restaurants offering a variety of dining styles. The tourist literature mentions at least 72 establishments and 95 appear on the state’s web site. Most of those listed say they specialize in American cuisine or seafood, while many fewer offer special cuisines such as Italian, Mexican, or French (see Table 5.6). The town reports that there are 201 restaurants with seating, 138 of which serve alcohol. There are many more without seating. [Source: Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee, January 2002, from Town of Ocean City license issuances, 2001.]

There are 13 restaurants in Worcester County outside Ocean City. Half are in Berlin (7), with fewer in Pocomoke City (4), Snow Hill (1) and Bishopville (1 only open on weekends).

## **Retail Stores and Shopping**

Tourism in itself does not generate the revenues sought by local and state governments and business owners. To make tourism work for the area, visitors must spend money on goods and services. Otherwise, their demands for services and impacts on special resources simply drain a community of its assets. “Success” in heritage tourism involves more than the receipts in the cash register—community pride, community education opportunities, and other contributions to local quality of life can be other positive changes. In the final analysis, however, it is difficult to generate local investment unless it can be shown to affect local revenues.

Half the visitors to any area, heritage or not, typically spend a great deal of time shopping. Shopping, in other words, is an expected part of the visitor experience. Thus, it is crucial to provide a variety of interesting shopping opportunities for visitors – gift shops, antique stores, arts and crafts galleries, specialty clothing and jewelry stores, plant nurseries, farmers’ markets, and other unique stores will serve this need most effectively. Note that stores that tourists can find in their home communities have less appeal to them while on vacation. Thus, some stores that are important to local residents are less likely to serve visitors.

The retail picture in the Lower Eastern Shore is dominated, as it is in other ways, by Ocean City. Its popularity has resulted in an explosion of shopping opportunities. Beyond Ocean City, however, there are several signature shops and shopping areas that have the potential to attract more visitors. These shops are listed by county below.

Farmstands and farmers’ markets are an integral part of the local landscape. Markets can be found in Princess Anne (Somerset County), Salisbury (Wicomico County), and Berlin, Ocean City, and Pocomoke City (Worcester County). In addition, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee’s arts brochure lists artists throughout the region willing to sell directly to visitors.

**Somerset County** – Crisfield offers gift shops, antique stores, and art stores. Bird decoys are a unique local item that is quite popular with visitors.

**Wicomico County** – Downtown Salisbury, known as “the City Center,” is a unique landscaped “Main Street” with many restored historic buildings and much charm. Converted to a pedestrian mall many years ago, it was recently reopened as a one-way street allowing auto access to a limited amount of parking. It offers a number of antique shops, a unique jewelry store, Kuhn’s (which won a statewide Chamber of Commerce award for its retail service), the Art Institute and Gallery restaurants and cafes, and commercial businesses. Beyond the Center,

several specialty shops in Salisbury are also likely to be of particular interest to visitors:

**The Country House** – This store is reputed to have the largest selection of country articles east of the Mississippi River.

**Salisbury Pewter** – The pewter factory has an adjoining store with interesting pewter articles. Some are made on site, although most of the manufacturing has now been moved to the company’s Easton location.

**Chesapeake East Handmade Ceramics** – A renovated nineteenth-century commercial building is the home of this well-known ceramics workshop and retail store.



In downtown Salisbury, this former hotel in a historically African-American commercial district is now home to Chesapeake East, a specialty ceramics studio and store. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Worcester County** (excluding Ocean City) – Popular heritage tourism-oriented stores in Worcester County include:

**Globe Theater and Balcony Gallery** – In this unique site located in Berlin, books and artwork are the focus. The site is housed in an old theater, with a cafe and deli serving coffee, pastries, and light fare.

**Mariners’ Country Down and Store** – This site creates the look and feel of an old country village. Crafts and furniture are made on site by local artisans.

**Ocean City** – Ocean City has a number of gift shops that provide many items closely associated with the beach experience – taffy, plush toys, and other souvenir items. On the mainland in West Ocean City, the Ocean City Outlet Mall is another attractive destination for visitors.

## **Strategy for Achieving Optimum Visitation**

The following sections discuss target markets and the marketing and communications that must be tailored to reach those markets most effectively. It is followed by a summary of actions that set forth a strategy for achieving optimum visitation.

### **Target Markets**

**Ocean City Visitors** – Initially, visitors to Ocean City represent the most likely market for generating tourism elsewhere on the Lower Eastern Shore. The many visitors who have already decided to visit the region – many for days at a time, and many of these year after year – are an attractive target for marketing.

It should be noted, however, tourists en route to Ocean City are unlikely to stop on the way to their destination. Very few will visit any attractions until they have reached their accommodations. For example, although Salisbury is conveniently located along two major routes to the beach (U.S. Routes 13 and 50), visitors destined for Ocean City will probably not take the time to visit Salisbury’s attractions as they pass by on their way to Ocean City. The best time to reach these visitors is after they have arrived, and are eager to see what else the region has to offer.

Once visitors have settled into Ocean City and have spent time on the beach and boardwalk, the rest of the Lower Eastern Shore may be appealing to those inclined to explore. During the summer, rainy or cloudy days offer the best opportunities to for Ocean City visitors to seek alternatives to the expected sand and sun. Orientation information about the heritage area should be made available at a visible location within Ocean City. Long-term, a means of accomplishing this goal would be to develop the proposed Lower Eastern Shore Regional Interpretive Center, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, which would add to heritage attractions within Ocean City itself. In the short term, the town is seeking to develop an attractive kiosk with information about the region’s sites, communities, and events.

**Families** – Families are perhaps the best targets among Ocean City visitors, because they are often looking for ways to entertain their children when weather conditions (or sunburn) make outside activities less appealing. Families returning year after year may file information or make a mental note about a prospective adventure for another visit. Following are ideas for activities to market to this target group.

**Nature Experiences** – Nature experiences in the Lower Eastern Shore could include the following:

**Canoeing on the Pocomoke** – Families looking for an outdoor nature activity could rent a canoe in Snow Hill and paddle down the Pocomoke River.

**Salisbury Crescent** – A typical family excursion might involve the Ward Museum (which is also a recommended Regional Interpretative Center), a visit to the Salisbury Zoo, and a game at Perdue Stadium.

**Crisfield Vicinity** – Another family visit might begin at Janes Island and continue to Crisfield, where cruises depart for Smith Island.

**Renting Bicycles** – Older children might enjoy bicycling some of the trails in the region, but families would need to plan ahead for this activity, because rented bicycles are available only in Ocean City. If bicycles were available in other locations, the popularity of bicycling for casual visitors might grow.

**Assateague Island** – When the Assateague Coastal Bays Learning Lab and the Pocomoke River Discovery Center are built, they will familiarize visitors with a variety of nature learning activities. These centers will be a great help in showing visitors the diversity of landscapes and nature experiences that await them throughout the region.

**Fishing, Crabbing, and Clamming** – A traditional part of a beach visit for some families – those who know how – is to fish, crab, or clam. Those providing nature outings might offer information on how this is done – complete with demonstration – explain what equipment is used, and explain how visitors can get information on where it is safe, welcome, and permitted to enjoy these simple pleasures. (Some of these visitors may even need an explanation of how tides work along the shore and in the bays.) Although it might not be desirable to encourage all of the millions who visit Ocean City to do this, those who “self-select” themselves as an audience for nature outings might be encouraged to continue seeking experiences like this that are, for some, part of the “way of life” to be enjoyed in the Lower Eastern Shore counties. This idea relates to the “water access” goal for the visitor experience in Chapter 4, and the water experiences that are possible in the area as listed in Chapter 5.

**Heritage Experiences** – Heritage experiences might include:

**Pemberton Historical Park** – Special events at Pemberton Historical Park may be appealing to families with children, as long as these activities are

planned with their needs in mind. The history of shipping or agriculture might be especially interesting for older children.

**Ward Museum** – The Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art offers children’s programs, and the outdoor interpretation and landscaping to be installed soon will be appealing to families. The link to the Salisbury Zoo via the Salisbury greenway makes these two sites a natural pair for a family outing.

**Furnace Town** – Furnace Town already does an excellent job of interpreting the past and showing visitors the reality of life in a nineteenth-century rural community. The site sponsors regular events and activities that allow visitors to participate in the lifeways of an early village that was once a commercial center for the region.

**Chipman Center** – The Chipman Center’s performances of traditional, live music are appealing for families, and a visit there also offers an opportunity to learn about African American heritage.

**Accohannock Tribal Museum** – The Accohannock Tribal Museum in Marion offers visitors an opportunity to learn about local Native American culture. A new museum and cultural center called Bending Water Park is now in the early planning stages. If the Accohannocks’ vision for this facility is realized, it will be an attractive site for children and families. Children are especially intrigued with activities that are done in traditional dress.

**Hebron and Delmar** – Another trip might include the Chesapeake Fire Museum and the Delmar Railroad Museum, two sites that introduce children to transportation and safety themes from an earlier time.

**Adkins Complex** – The Adkins Historical and Museum Complex might also appeal to families. Families would enjoy watching costumed interpreters demonstrate tasks and crafts from the periods represented by the buildings in the complex.

**Events and Communities** – Multiple events and communities may also be draw families – the new boardwalk in Snow Hill, for example, will be an attractive site, and such events as the Crisfield Crab Derby are ideal for families.

All of these experiences for families need to be communicated clearly so that parents and children can make informed decisions about whether these site visits and activities are appropriate to their interests and needs.

**Convention Spouses** – Spouses of visitors attending conventions in Ocean City are another target market for increasing visitation to the rest of the Lower

Eastern Shore. Many convention groups set up programs to entertain spouses while attendees are in sessions. Local inbound receptive tour operators provide day trips that are arranged by the group's organizing committee. The convention group keeps track of attendees, collects money, and retains the tour company to handle the program. The spring and fall convention market provides the region with many opportunities to expand its tourism base.

Currently, however, no receptive tour operator is in place to manage such programs. Investment would be required to aid an entrepreneur in developing the programs, acquiring motorcoaches or vans, building a presence through advertising, and bringing all of this together to make special programs available to groups visiting Ocean City. Experiences that might be of special interest to convention spouses include:

**Arts** – A contemporary arts tour could take visitors to galleries in Salisbury, Crisfield, Berlin, Ocean City, and other communities. These tours are especially popular when visitors have a chance to meet the artists and purchase their works. A traditional arts tour could include stops at the Ward Museum (decoy art and waterfowl carving), Purnell Museum (needle art), the Patrick Henry Arts Center in Berlin, and visits to artists' workshops. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee's brochure on regional artists (recently expanded in a second edition) provides an excellent starting point for these tours.

**Shopping** – A shopping tour might include Chesapeake East, Salisbury Pewter, and The Country House in Salisbury, plus a visit to the outlet mall.

**Museums** – Themed museum and heritage site tours specializing in different periods of history would help to introduce visitors to the changing nature of the Lower Eastern Shore over the last three hundred years. Some private homes and churches might be available for visits by special arrangement.

Successful tours also need interesting dining stops, narrated travel between sites, and places to shop for souvenirs. In addition to the usual possibility of a restaurant meal, other possibilities are box lunches eaten at unique picnic sites or meals provided church-supper style (with the added benefit of allowing church groups to earn funds).

**Regional Weekend Visitors** – Beyond Ocean City, the primary market for the Lower Eastern Shore is adult couples living in metropolitan areas within 150 miles of Salisbury. That area includes Baltimore/Washington, Norfolk/Virginia Beach, and Philadelphia. This type of visitor typically enjoys:



**Bicycling or Canoeing** – Visitors may enjoy moving at an easy pace through interesting scenery.

**Small Towns** – Weekenders could stay overnight at a historic bed and breakfast and drive through landscapes and along back roads that are new to them.

**Stories from the Past** – Visitors can learning about the area’s heritage through stories about the people who lived, worked, worshipped, and played here in the past.

**Visual Arts** – Visiting art galleries can help visitors find treasures to take home.

**Crafts and Antiques** – Visitors like to admire the talents of local residents and shop for that special something that is not easily found at home or elsewhere.

These couples are likely to be well educated, with reasonably high incomes, and often with two earners. They are likely to need packages that save them time in researching imaginative experiences, rather than money, during their weekends at the Lower Eastern Shore. Packages should combine accommodations, meals, themed directional brochures/maps, and tickets to appropriate attractions and tours. Targeting these materials to the appropriate audience is the best way of encouraging them to visit the area. Communications and advertising are outlined in the next section.

Many of these targeted couples will be 50 years of age or older, the baby boom generation. “The boomers are coming” is a phrase that is frequently heard in the tourism industry. Boomers are an enormous group: since 1996, a boomer has turned 50 every seven minutes. They have the time, money, and interest in travel that will lead them to visit such places as heritage areas. They are the healthiest, wealthiest, and best educated. Moreover, they are interested in heritage tourism. In appealing to this market, the region must ask (and answer) the following questions: “When these visitors arrive, what activities will we offer them? Where will they want to go? What will they want to do?”

## **Marketing and Communications**

Selecting a name, positioning it in the market, and packaging the region’s identity are key elements of any strategy designed to build the appeal of the Lower Eastern Shore.

## **Positioning**

“Branding” is a necessary part of any marketing strategy. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area needs a name and unique tag line or slogan that capture the image that visitors wish to experience. Possibilities suggested for the name during the planning process have included Old Somerset and Chesapeake Country, but visitors may not associate these terms with this region. (Chesapeake Country is in use throughout the Eastern Shore, for example.)

The printed literature available in the Lower Eastern Shore is diverse and interesting, but it is difficult to identify consistent tag lines or slogans across the region. A few of these, found in local marketing materials, appear below. These slogans tell visitors to the region about the experience they can expect but none differentiates the region from other areas.

Your passport to adventure Catch a glimpse of the Chesapeake It's all right here! Your key to Chesapeake pleasures Yours to enjoy Everything fun under the sun See what nature has kept for herself Experience the heritage of.... A family affair Beach and beyond Step back into history and explore the past Someplace special
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In addition, the same brochures in which these tag lines appear focus on communicating county names. This is understandable, because media pieces are frequently funded by local governments. At the same time, it is important to remember that county and municipal boundaries are largely invisible to visitors. The existing marketing materials sponsored by the LESHHC have been successful in emphasizing the region as a single unit. Future materials produced to market the region should follow this example.

The Lower Eastern Shore’s media materials should also reflect the mission adopted by the LESHHC. While it may not be appropriate to print the entire text of the mission statement in the region’s brochures, a shorter slogan should also be created for this purpose. It is important for sites and local governments in the region to

buy into the slogan and mission statement, and to use them consistently. Creating the brand and accompanying slogan and positioning statement (and logo, if necessary) is beyond the scope of this plan. This task should be among the first to be undertaken once the heritage area is certified and can apply for the necessary grant funding to obtain expert advice and assistance.

## **Packaging**

Packaging is the key to successful tourism marketing. It is important to make it easy for visitors to plan their trips before they arrive, by providing maps, guides, and web site information. Even before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the trend was for individuals, couples, and families to take shorter vacations closer to home. The traditional long trip of a week or more is taken much less often than in the past. Brochures, web sites, and special promotions can provide visitors with options and a packaged lunch for one price, simplifying their planning while at the same time extending their visit to more locations than they might discover or decide to do on their own. Combine two such days into a weekend by adding overnight accommodations to the package.

In terms of group tour packaging, good possibilities exist for links to the cruise ships in Crisfield. Currently, it appears that many visitors arrive by motorcoach, take their day tour by ship, and then move on. Offering additional experiences – guided site visits or driving tours, or special meals or lodging, or all of these – “on shore” in the Crisfield area or elsewhere in the heritage area might encourage longer stays by these groups. An example of successful group packaging in Crisfield is the local Elderhostel program, which is coordinated to include accommodations at a Crisfield hotel or motel, meals, classes, and day transportation to and from Smith and Tangier Islands. Ocean City has a similar program to take advantage of its offerings on the other side of the heritage area.

Receptive tour operators create special tours for convention companions (see section on target markets above). They can also be effective and efficient in creating group packages and marketing them. Stimulating one or more of these businesses to arise in the region is a critical need.

## **Media**

The LESHHC must develop a media strategy appropriate for communicating with each segment of the target market. Communications at visitor reception centers should be designed to reflect the full range of experiences that are available to visitors across the region, in a coherent way. For example, for several years, the LESHHC has excelled in producing brochures that highlight different aspects of the region. The LESHHC’s current brochures include:

**Lower Eastern Shore: Adventures in Travel, A Historic Cultural Crossroad** – This brochure explains the significance of the region as a whole.

**A Cultural Arts Tour of the Lower Eastern Shore** – This brochure introduces visitors to art galleries, museums, and studios in the Lower Eastern Shore.

**“Home Grown”** – Produce stands, pick-your-own farms, and farmers markets are featured in this brochure.

**African-American Historic Sites** – This brochure raises awareness about a few of the most significant sites associated with the history of African Americans in the region.

With additional coordination and long-term planning, such media can be linked together to accomplish even more. Each of these four brochures follows a different style and approach. Although these pieces are each useful in their own right in conveying a message, as they require reprinting they should be redesigned according to a common design scheme to emphasize common themes, as well as the tag line and logo to be developed for the heritage area. This approach would provide visitors with a more coherent sense of the region.

The Beach to Bay Indian Trail brochure is a fifth regional brochure, covering this nationally designated route in Worcester and Somerset Counties. Although this program is managed by a separate organization, cooperation in “messaging,” if not also design, would be helpful in allowing visitors to understand that such regional offerings work together to provide an exceptional experience.

Creating this kind of unified and clear message is an important goal of this plan. Following are specific ideas to improve the major marketing materials reviewed for this chapter. Ideally, the three counties together would implement these ideas, borrowing the best experiences of each and working within a common design scheme. That is, each brochure could (and should) be slightly different, but be coordinated in style and appearance and work toward “cross-marketing” attractions in the other counties. Where appropriate, the three counties and LESHCH should continue creating regional brochures for specialty topics. Ideas for these include recreation and “for families” as discussed in Chapter 4.

A second, no less important recommendation for a media strategy is to create a unified calendar of events for the three counties. Even if published only on a web site for the sake of saving on printing costs and keeping it current, such an initiative would go far in communicating the concept of the region as a whole. (Although not strictly a part of a media strategy per se, this idea would also

facilitate cooperation for the events themselves over time, as communities learn more about the rhythm and needs of their neighbors' events and plan their own events accordingly.)

**Somerset County** – One of the best ways to attract visitors is to show them that the region is fun to visit. The visitor's guide for Somerset might be more appealing to visitors if it included a few pictures of visitors enjoying the landscape. A few more advertisements might help visitors to better understand what is available in the area. The combination of four-color and two-color printing is effective and interesting. The "lure brochure" (the short brochure that fits into racks in the many locations in which it is placed) includes photographs of tourism resources, but again, not many visitors are shown enjoying these offerings. The events calendar is focused on visitor-oriented events and limited to Somerset County. The "Points of Interest and Fishing" brochure uses two-color printing well and provides useful information about both the land and the water.

**Wicomico County** – The Wicomico County visitor's guide shows good community support with abundant advertising from both tourism and non-tourism businesses. The lure brochure uses photographs of visitors to communicate a sense of fun. An eclectic mix of everyday and visitor-oriented activities characterizes the events brochure.

**Worcester County** – Many of the county's media pieces have a unified theme that uses non-glossy paper printed in teal and mauve. Not all of the county's brochures focus on heritage tourism, but the ones that do are particularly strong. Trail maps and driving tours help visitors to find the county's resources.

## **Summary of Actions**

### **Target Markets**

- 5.1 Develop Niche Markets** – Focus on the following niche markets: (1) Ocean City visitors – families, convention spouses/companions; (2) regional weekend visitors; and (3) nature tourists.
- 5.2 Focus on Packaging** – Package attractions, accommodations, dining and shopping to facilitate visitation by both "free and independent travelers" (individuals, couples, and families) and tour groups.
- 5.3 Support Interpretive Development** – Support interpretive development attractive to these target markets.

## **Carrying Capacity**

- 5.4 Extend Hours at Sites** – Develop ways to extend hours for historic sites, especially on weekends and during seasons when more visitors are in the region. Many smaller sites in the region, much loved by their volunteers and communities, need more visitation and visibility to develop the long-term public support and interest that will keep these sites “alive.”
- 5.5 Monitor the Impact of Automobiles** – Beware the automobile’s impact on the region’s historic communities; monitor these impacts, use off-site parking and shuttles for major events, and work toward routine public transportation where traffic reaches negative impacts.

## **Tourism Business Ventures**

- 5.5 Develop Recreational Facilities and Services** – Encourage the development of more facilities and guide services to serve those on water-based educational or recreational tours, especially outside Ocean City.
- 5.6 Promote the Establishment of Outfitters** – Encourage the development of bicycle rental shops and canoe and sea-kayak outfitters able to help visitors access the entire heritage area.
- 5.7 Establish a Receptive Tour Operator** – Encourage the creation of at least one receptive tour operation business based locally. This receptive operator would create special programs and packaged tours, especially for but not limited to groups visiting Ocean City, primarily convention spouses. Such tours will help to address the need to extend the tourism season beyond the high summer visitation in the region.
- 5.8 Support New Ventures** – Develop assistance for existing ventures to allow their expansion, through marketing, loans, and other programs; assist them in trying out package arrangements. This applies not only to outfitters and recreational service providers, but also to restaurants, lodging, and retail merchants who seek to capitalize on the markets to be stimulated by the heritage area.

## **Marketing and Communications**

- 5.9 Orient Ocean City Visitors** – Create a visible location within Ocean

City to make orientation information about the heritage area available to the Ocean City visitor target market. Over time, develop the proposed Lower Eastern Shore Regional Interpretive Center, which is discussed in Chapter 3.

- 5.10 Concentrate on Branding** – Create the “Lower Eastern Shore” brand (and name, if necessary) and accompanying slogan and positioning statement (and logo, if necessary). This task should be one of the first to be undertaken once the heritage area is certified, and is therefore the first to require the collaboration and consensus of all tourism officials across the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area. (See Chapter 8 for a recommendation on organizing a committee to support regional tourism initiatives.)
- 5.11 Update Regional Brochures** – Apply the “Lower Eastern Shore” style to the present “family” of four regional brochures as they require reprinting or updating, and use this style for still other regional brochures. (Two more are recommended in Chapter 4, one for families and the other providing information about recreational opportunities across the region.) Encourage partners to do the same, providing enough variation in their marketing materials to convey individuality and excitement, and enough similarity to establish the heritage area and its attractions as a single entity.
- 5.12 Create Cooperative Marketing Programs** – Create cooperative marketing programs for target markets as appropriate, advertising in Ocean City and domestic markets as time and dollars permit. Cooperators include the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council, the tourism offices of the three counties and Ocean City, community-based advertising and marketing that relates to the heritage area (such as Chamber of Commerce websites), and the Maryland Office of Tourism Development. The MOTD is currently in the process of setting standards and guidelines for marketing initiatives among heritage areas and their partners.
- 5.13 Create a Calendar of Events** – Create a unified calendar of events for the three counties, published at a minimum on a web site for the sake of saving on printing costs and keeping it current.
- 5.14 Docent and Hospitality Training** – Using the state’s National Certification Program, undertake docent training at key interpretive sites. Encourage the development of regional hospitality training programs for employees and volunteers at local tourism-oriented businesses and organizations. It is important to note that docent training and hospitality training complement each other, but one does not replace the other. The

Maryland Office of Tourism Development can provide guidance about how to implement these goals.

### **Measurement and Tracking**

- 5.15 Measure Visitation** – Measure annual visitation to each county (Worcester County outside of Ocean City) using similar or identical protocols to provide a reliable benchmark to measure growth and improvement in tourism over time, and to gain feedback from visitors about their experiences and preferences and how marketing investments influenced their choices. Use state studies to assess changes in the economic impact of tourism annually and growth in tourism relative to other regions of the state. Incorporate these measures into the performance measurement system required by the MHAA.



## Chapter 6 Economic Development and Targeted Investment

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Pocomoke River Discovery Center, Pocomoke City, Worcester County

## Chapter 6

# **Economic Development and Targeted Investment**

### **Introduction**

One of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority's ten goals is "To increase the economic activity associated with tourism, creating opportunities for small business development, job growth, and a stronger tax base." Elsewhere in the program guidelines, the Authority further states that "a successful heritage area needs to have a viable economy which recognizes the value of the area's heritage resources."

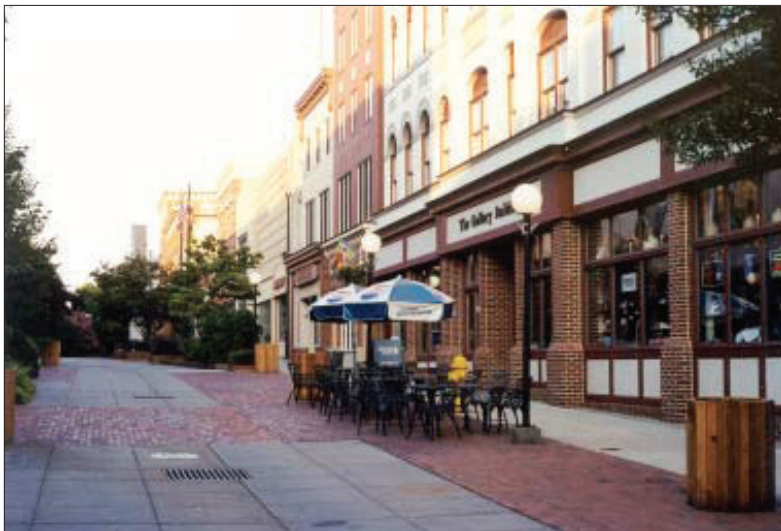
Chapter 6 addresses critical aspects of economic and community development through historic preservation throughout the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area, and support for tourism development within the Certified Heritage Area, especially within targeted areas. The preceding chapters have laid the groundwork for the discussion of economic development here, in describing the strategies for linkages, interpretation, and heritage tourism that embrace the special resources of this heritage area.

### **Development Trends**

Development trends in the three counties of the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area are varied. With 84,644 residents, Wicomico County has the largest population, well over that of the other two counties combined. Worcester County has a population of 46,543; Somerset has 24,747. With lower average incomes than the state average, every population center in this region qualifies for Community Legacy support. Somerset and Worcester Counties are among the eight poorest counties able to participate in the "One Maryland" state economic development program. All counties enjoy healthy agriculture and forestry, and supporting businesses and processors for these industries are evident throughout the region. The region's maritime heritage is especially

apparent in Salisbury, Ocean City, and Crisfield, with a number of other, smaller communities also reliant on the water – especially Deal Island and Rumbley in Somerset County.

Salisbury, the Wicomico County seat, is the region’s largest population center, with a municipal population of approximately 25,000 and many more living beyond city boundaries. The historic port function of the town survives, and city leaders work hard to maintain the economic health of Salisbury’s historic downtown, aided by the presence of county, state, and federal workers there. The city recently completed a new downtown plan and is seeking Community Legacy support for its implementation. Areas beyond the city are developing rapidly, aided by its historic location at the crossroads of two major travel routes, U.S. Routes 50 and 13. A new bypass around the city promises to stimulate still more development beyond the city’s core. Although it will be a relief to remove the heavy traffic of Route 50 from downtown, the lack of such traffic could make the task of building up the health of the downtown more difficult. A principal asset is the town’s architecture, with its well-built nineteenth and early twentieth century core, surrounded by intact early residential neighborhoods and beautiful public buildings.



Once a pedestrian-only mall, this section of Main Street in Salisbury, Wicomico County, has recently been reopened to vehicular traffic and short-term parking. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

The Town of Ocean City, as described in the previous chapter the summer destination for millions, is an economic engine not simply for Worcester County but also for the region. Its insouciant, eclectic architecture of all periods from the late nineteenth century and cheery seaside commercialism, complete with an outstanding historic boardwalk and carousel, makes for an appealing and unique place. City leaders are working to improve the level of commercial investment and retail offerings in the historic downtown area. A successful bus system, recently enlarged with shuttle parking in West Ocean City, keeps many people out of their cars, but heavy traffic is a given condition in the summer.

Berlin, Snow Hill, and Pocomoke City are other historic towns in Worcester County; Ocean Pines is a largely residential planned community across the bay from Ocean City. Its presence – and the growing number of golf courses – is an indication of the popularity of new construction in Worcester County, on and off the water. Berlin, like most other towns in the heritage area, is a well-built and well-preserved town predominantly nineteenth-century in form and appearance. It has benefited economically from its proximity to Ocean City, only eight miles away, and a strategy of historic preservation embraced by city leadership, even attracting two major movie productions. Snow Hill, further away, and Pocomoke City, even further, stand to benefit from visitors venturing out from Ocean City but are at the moment only holding their own economically. Snow Hill at least has the economic energy from its status as the county seat. Both are also enthusiastic about historic preservation.

Somerset County is among Maryland's smallest in terms of population, and, when all its wetlands are removed from the calculation, one of the smallest in terms of land area as well. It is attracting an eclectic mix of scattered rural residential development, from large new homes and townhouses overlooking the water to manufactured housing. Princess Anne is the well-preserved historic county seat, and recently underwent major renovation of streets and utilities. Crisfield, the county's largest town, is still a major seafood producer and harbor despite the difficulties endured by the industry thanks to declines in fisheries in the Chesapeake Bay. It is also the embarkation point for tours to Smith and Tangier Islands, but has benefited only to a small degree from this tourist traffic. Historic preservation interest is evident in some well-kept homes and commercial buildings; a major fire that destroyed a number of buildings some years back hurt the downtown's vitality. Renovation of under-used buildings on the waterfront has been proposed.

## **Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation within a Recognized Heritage Area**

A number of excellent federal, state, and local programs provide grants, loans, and tax incentives for historic preservation and heritage tourism. Tax incentives for historic rehabilitation are generally unlimited in nature, and thus can provide hundreds of thousands of dollars of support to enterprising property owners. In Maryland, nonprofit organizations are also eligible. While they do not require heritage area status, they are potentially a major source of funding for preservation in the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area.

There are two income tax incentive programs available for the rehabilitation of historic properties in Maryland, at the federal and state levels, and two property tax incentive programs available as local options for Maryland jurisdictions. Information on all of the programs discussed here can be found in a booklet

offered by the Maryland Historical Trust, “Tax Incentives for the Preservation of Older Buildings and Communities in Maryland,” available at: [www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net/taxbroch/pdf](http://www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net/taxbroch/pdf).

### **Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit**

The federal government provides for a 20 percent federal income tax credit on the cost of rehabilitating income-producing “certified historic structures.” The money that is put into the rehabilitation must exceed the adjusted basis of the building (the purchase price, minus the value of the land, minus any depreciation taken), and the tax credit may be extended over as many as twenty years. A certified historic structure is a building that is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places, or a building that is located in a registered historic district and certified by the National Park Service as contributing to the historic significance of that district.

A registered historic district is any district listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A State or local historic district may also qualify as a registered historic district if the district and the enabling statute are certified by the Secretary of the Interior. A 10 percent tax credit is also available for the rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936. For more information, see the National Park Service’s “Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives” at [www2.cr.nps.gov/TPS/tax/brochure1.htm](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/TPS/tax/brochure1.htm).

### **Maryland Rehabilitation Tax Credit**

Maryland’s rehabilitation tax credit is one of the most generous in the nation, 25 percent applied to the state income tax. Eligible historic properties are those listed in the National or Maryland Register or designated by local ordinance; if they are in a historic district, they must be contributing buildings. Historic properties not so designated may also be eligible in heritage areas (see discussion later in this chapter).

The credit is available for owner-occupied residential property as well as income-producing property. The rehabilitation expenditure in a 24-month period must be “substantial,” defined to mean that it exceeds \$5,000 for owner-occupied residential property, or, for income-producing property, the greater of the adjusted basis of the structure or \$5,000. In 2001, the state made this program even more appealing: if the credit exceeds the taxpayer’s tax liability, the state will pay the difference. The changes in 2001 also made 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations eligible for the tax credit for the first time.

## **Applying for Federal and State Tax Credits**

The renovation work for either credit must go through a three-part review process conducted by the Maryland Historical Trust. The first two steps involve filling out forms that address the significance of the property and the character of the work and show that the work follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Once the work is complete, the applicant must send in pictures of the work to allow Trust staff to review it. The most important thing in either the state or the federal process is to consider the tax credit before the work begins. The state generally wants to see "before" and "after" pictures to enable reviewers to assess what has been done.

## **Property Tax Relief**

At the local level, some types of property tax relief can also be applied to historic buildings. Local property tax credits are available for the rehabilitation of homes as well as income-producing designated historic buildings in a growing number of Maryland jurisdictions. None of these, however, are in the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area. Property tax relief is usually provided through:

**Offset of Property Taxes** – Property owners receive an offset of property taxes owed by a percentage of the rehabilitation expenditure, up to ten percent depending on the jurisdiction's decision in passing a local ordinance, called a "property tax credit."

**Property Tax Freeze** – Property owners receive an offset of property taxes by an amount equal to the increase in property taxes resulting from the rehabilitation improvements for a period of up to ten years, called a "property tax freeze."

## **Economic Benefits of Heritage Area Recognition**

Overall, the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area stands to gain the following benefits from the recognition and marketing of the region as a heritage area:

**Heritage Tourism** – Tourism provides opportunities for visitors to spend money. Heritage tourism, in particular, has been shown to attract visitors who spend more and stay longer. The tourism benefits of heritage areas are discussed in Chapter 5 of this plan.

**Jobs** – Heritage areas encourage the growth of tourism businesses. They also contribute to the creation of employment in preservation-related construction and in "businesses that support businesses."

**Community Identity** – Heritage areas help communities to rediscover the resources and traditions that make their regions unique and identifiable.

**Quality of Life** – Tourism-related investments benefit overall quality of life, creating more attractive places to retain and attract businesses and investment.

**Investment** – Heritage area development enables a region to show investors where a community is going and how they can capitalize on a community's unique assets.

**Traditional Economy** – When heritage areas are created, respect for the traditional elements of a regional economy grows. In the Lower Eastern Shore, these elements include agriculture, fishing, and forestry.

Many of these benefits are intangible, spinning off from community investment in interpretive development, visitor services, linkages, and stewardship. Nonetheless, they are real.

## **Anticipated Economic Benefits of the Lower Eastern Shore Certified Heritage Area**

The recognition of a Certified Heritage Area has the potential to result in quantifiable economic impacts and revenue. Economic impact estimates are based on models that reflect experience with other tourism destinations. The following discussion covers the various benefits that are anticipated over time in the Lower Eastern Shore Certified Heritage Area.

### **Economic Investment Impacts**

Public investment alone is a benefit of heritage tourism development in a Certified Heritage Area, but when private investment is added to the equation, the benefits are more far-reaching. Public investment is a small fraction of the amount that private investors might spend in a heritage area. By emphasizing the area's unique history and resources, even a small amount invested in heritage tourism can make this area more attractive for private investment.

### **Heritage Tourism Benefits**

Even if the potential spin-off benefits from the state's investment in heritage tourism are ignored, heritage tourism promotion can be expected to result in increased spending by visitors from other parts of the state and from out of state. This spending alone can have a positive impact on private investment and the jobs it supports.

Based on comparisons to similar attractions in other parts of the region and the country, visitation to heritage area attractions could be increased by a few percentage points. State and local investments in heritage area attractions and promotion will

- Attract new visitors to the Lower Eastern Shore;
- Persuade some area visitors to extend their stay for an extra night to visit heritage area attractions; and
- Attract some area visitors to take better advantage of the region’s historic and natural resources in addition to spending time at the beach.

Heritage area visitation is projected to increase by an estimated 185,000 annual visitors, roughly a five-percent growth in area tourism.

**Table 6.1 Increased Visitation to the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**

<b>Visitors/Spending</b>	<b>Somerset County</b>	<b>Wicomico County</b>	<b>Worcester County</b>	<b>3-County Region</b>
New Heritage Visitors	2,000	10,000	37,500	49,500
Extended-Stay Visitors	1,000	5,000	37,500	43,500
Heritage Area Day Visitors	7,000	35,000	50,000	92,000
Total New Visitors	10,000	50,000	125,000	185,000
Annual New Spending (in thousands)	\$424,000	\$1,935,000	\$9,119,000	\$11,478,000

*Source: Bay Area Economics, 2002.*

While some of the new visitors to heritage area attractions will be Maryland residents, 60 percent of these visitors are expected to come to the heritage area from outside the state, bringing new dollars to the state and local economies. Based on statistics provided by the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, these regional visitors are likely to spend an average of \$57 per person per day, yielding total new spending of \$11.5 million annually. Table 6.1 summarizes the incremental new visitors and spending in the Lower Eastern Shore as a result of heritage area investments and promotion.

### **New Development**

Visitor spending will support the development of new hotels, restaurants, attractions, and retail shops. Overnight guests will generate a need for additional rooms in hotels and inns. With the increase in visitation, the region could support an additional 261 hotel/inn rooms.



New visitor spending on meals and entertainment could support new restaurants and food outlets. Development levels may in fact be higher, because the incremental dollars from new visitors could provide the profit margin required to attract a new restaurant to the area. This restaurant might attract both residents and visitors. The improved ambiance and mix of stores and restaurants in the heritage area, made possible by increased visitor spending, will have appeal for visitors and residents alike. For example, while visitor spending at one particular attraction may not be enough to support a new restaurant, the combined spending of visitors and residents could support a larger, better, or more unusual restaurant.

**Table 6.2 New Development in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**

<b>New Development / Investment</b>	<b>Somerset County</b>	<b>Wicomico County</b>	<b>Worcester County</b>	<b>3-County Region</b>
Hotel / Inn Rooms	8	34	219	261
Retail Space (sq. ft.)	-	2,000	6,000	8,000
Restaurant / Entertainment (sq. ft.)	-	2,000	7,000	9,000
New Private Investment	\$400,000	\$1,866,000	\$11,496,000	\$13,762,000

*Source: Bay Area Economics, 2002.*

Incremental increases in retail spending by visitors could support additional retail businesses in new or renovated buildings. The amount of construction activity generated by new visitor demand depends on the share of businesses that construct new facilities, renovate older buildings, or move into recently constructed “turnkey” buildings. For restaurants and retail shops, perhaps one quarter of the new businesses will build new facilities, one quarter will renovate existing buildings, and half will locate in existing buildings that need only a minimal remodeling. The region could see development of 9,000 square feet of new restaurants and food outlets and 8,000 square feet of retail space in new buildings or existing buildings with substantial rehabilitation. (See Table 6.2.) Private investment in new or rehabilitated buildings would total \$13.8 million.

### **New Jobs**

The potential employment opportunities generated by expanded heritage tourism will focus primarily on private development associated with new visitor spending. The opening of new hotel rooms, restaurants, entertainment, and retail establishments will create an estimated 209 new jobs for the new staff needed to operate them. In addition to jobs in businesses that heritage tourism supports, visitor spending could indirectly support 163 spin-off jobs elsewhere in the Maryland economy for a total of 372 new Maryland jobs.

The new real estate investment supported by heritage tourism will require the equivalent of 170 full-time construction jobs, as well as 357 spin-off jobs elsewhere in the Maryland economy, as shown in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3 New Jobs in Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**

<b>New Jobs</b>	<b>Somerset County</b>	<b>Wicomico County</b>	<b>Worcester County</b>	<b>3-County Region</b>
Operating Jobs	3	40	166	209
Spin-Off Jobs in Maryland	10	23	130	163
Total New Ongoing Jobs	13	63	296	372
Construction Jobs	5	23	142	170
Spin-Off Jobs in Maryland	10	49	298	357
Total Construction-Period Jobs	15	72	440	527

*Source: Bay Area Economics, 2002.*

### **State and Local Government Fiscal Benefits**

For state and local government, the potential fiscal benefits from heritage tourism improvements in the Certified Heritage Area will include:

- Sales taxes from visitors
- Hotel taxes from overnight visitors
- Income taxes from employees of visitor-based businesses
- Increased property taxes from businesses serving visitors

The State of Maryland collects a 5-percent sales tax on all retail and restaurant sales, except for groceries and pharmaceuticals. Ninety percent of new visitor sales are assumed to be taxable; hotel room and restaurant revenues are among them. Individual employees pay state income taxes on a sliding scale, and 70 to 90 percent of the new jobs are expected to be held by Maryland residents. The state's share of real property taxes is less than 10 percent of total property taxes – \$0.084 per \$100 of assessed value.

Shown in Table 6.4, the economic activity resulting from increased heritage area visitation will generate an estimated \$384,100 in new annual Maryland State taxes. This estimate reflects just the taxes generated by visitors from out-of-state – 60 percent of total visitors.

Each of the heritage area counties will also receive increased tax revenues resulting from the area's new visitors, ranging from \$13,500 in annual new taxes

in Somerset County to \$475,200 in Worcester County. These include increased property, income, room and food and beverage taxes.

**Table 6.4 New State and County Taxes**

<b>New Taxes</b>	<b>Somerset County</b>	<b>Wicomico County</b>	<b>Worcester County</b>	<b>3-County Region</b>
State	\$12,400	\$65,400	\$306,300	\$384,100
County	\$13,500	\$80,200	\$475,200	\$568,900

*Source: Bay Area Economics, 2002.*

## **Economic Development Benefits**

Heritage area management plans are about more than heritage tourism. Economic development is a key motivation for the involvement of the three counties and smaller jurisdictions. Many places have taken this opportunity to develop comprehensive economic development strategies that build on heritage tourism. Economic development initiatives have more far-reaching benefits than those of tourism alone, because these initiatives seek to change the fundamental dynamics and psychology of investment. The goals are broader and more ambitious, and the process takes more time to develop. There are two aspects to these economic benefits:

**For Businesses** – Business investment is often the key focus of economic development strategies. These strategies aim to attract or establish new businesses and to encourage businesses to invest in new buildings or renovate existing ones. Enhancing the operations of existing businesses is another key motivation. Improvements to Main Streets, business districts, and transportation corridors can help to shift customer response and investor perceptions of a heritage area. These improvements can attract significant new development and business investment, which in turn create new employment opportunities for county residents, higher property values, and higher tax revenues.

**For Residents** – Economic development strategies also focus on improving residents’ quality of life. These improvements can encourage landlords to upgrade their properties and homeowners to reinvest in their homes. Community improvements can increase an area’s appeal for other potential homebuyers and renters, which may lead to higher property values. Economic development can create jobs for area residents, give them a better standard of living, and provide more income to invest in housing. Appealing communities, in turn, attract visitors.



The Globe Theater in Snow Hill is a unique attraction that includes a bookstore and café. An adjacent flower shop adds to the appeal of this site in Worcester County. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

## **Grants and Tax Benefits for Projects within a Certified Heritage Area**

All areas and programs within a Certified Heritage Area are eligible for at least one kind of grant from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA), plus special state tax incentives which are described in detail further down in this chapter. The grants and tax benefits available to heritage areas from the MHAA are set forth in Table 6.5. Portions of the Recognized Heritage Area that are not included within the Certified Heritage Area boundary obtain benefits as described above but are not eligible for MHAA grants (but are eligible for many others through the Maryland Historical Trust and other state programs).

## **Grants for Projects within a Certified Heritage Area (but outside a Target Investment Area)**

For those parts of the Lower Eastern Shore Certified Heritage Area that are outside Target Investment Areas (see next sections), non-capital MHAA grants of up to \$50,000 are available for up to 50 percent of the cost of projects for planning, design, interpretation, marketing, and programming. Although these non-capital grants are available to anyone, the most likely recipients are non-profits, partnerships, and local governments.

Funds for these and other grants come from the MHAA's Financing Fund, which receives an annual appropriation of \$1 million. During the time before grants are drawn down, this amount continues to earn interest. In 2001, the fund contained about \$4 million.

The \$50,000 grants available throughout the Certified Heritage Area cannot be used for acquisition or development or capital projects. The projects that seek these grants should clearly support the goals of the heritage area. To stay competitive, it is important to prioritize applicants. In the future, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council will hold a preliminary round of reviews at the regional level and submit only the most competitive projects for state review.

In identifying candidates for \$50,000 grants, it is important to justify the importance of a particular project. The state's goal is to support projects that have a demonstrable economic impact. These projects should focus on initiatives or areas where it is possible to create a "critical mass" that will yield results. Projects that are ready for implementation have a much better chance of being funded. For a project to be competitive, funds must be lined up and ready for use; a higher-than-minimum match is likely to increase its competitiveness. Rather than recommending the establishment of specific eligibility rules for funding, the state encourages project sponsors to find creative ways to stay competitive.

Although MHAA has established a limit of \$50,000 for each grant, there is no prohibition against sequential grants for the same project. Applications for project grants must compete against others in heritage areas throughout the state.

## **Grants for Projects within a Target Investment Area**

The process for designating areas for targeted state investment within the Certified Heritage Area is described in the next section. Within these designated areas, known in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area as Target Investment Areas, projects can obtain the non-capital MHAA grants described in the preceding section. In addition, they are eligible for MHAA capital grants for up to 50 percent of the cost of acquisition, development, and other activities, up to a maximum single grant \$100,000. As in the non-capital grants, there is no prohibition against sequential grants for the same project, and applications for project grants must compete against others in heritage areas throughout the state. Projects within TIAs are also eligible for tax credits as described in a section following the description of the areas selected for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. (Loans from the MHAA Financing Fund or via revenue bonds that can be issued by MHAA are also possible under this program, but none have been made so far.)

## **Target Investment Areas**

Heritage areas have been successful at fostering new types of economic opportunities on a regional level. To take advantage of these opportunities, the MHAA created the concept of "target investment" for specific parts of Certified

Heritage Areas where MHAA funds are to be focused (especially the capital grants described above). The state's goals for this investment rest on three principles:

**Economic Development** – TIAs should promote the economic development of the region by stimulating the provision of tourism services and businesses.

**Interpretation** – The interpretation of natural, cultural, and historic resources should be a source of economic energy to accomplish individual TIA goals and projects.

**Historic Preservation** – Heritage areas should stimulate public and private investment in historic preservation.

In this plan, these designated investment areas are called Target Investment Areas (TIAs). (This is in preference to the MHAA's title for these areas, Target Investment Zones, and is chosen to emphasize that these areas are not zoning districts in the traditional sense, but are areas that are eligible for specific types of state funding.) The identification of TIAs is an important component of heritage area management plans, because TIAs identify the places where focused state investment is most desirable. A key feature of Maryland's program, TIAs are designed to translate improvements in interpretation, visitor services, and linkages into economic benefits in selected areas that are most likely to take advantage of the impact of heritage tourism.

### **Criteria for Target Investment Areas**

**State Criteria** – The State of Maryland has adopted the following criteria for areas that wish to be designated as TIAs:

**State Criterion 1 – Private Investment**

The state is eager to invest in projects that have the potential to attract funding from the private sector.

**State Criterion 2 – Program Incentives**

Wherever possible, other state, federal, and local programs should be brought to bear in accomplishing the goals of each TIA project.

**State Criterion 3 – Economic Development Resources**

TIAs have greater potential to succeed when local and regional economic development activities are geared toward them.

**State Criterion 4 – Revitalization Designations**

TIAs must overlap as much as possible with other local, state, and federal "revitalization" designations.

**State Criterion 5 – Data Collection**

Boundaries for TIAs must be drawn in a way that facilitates the collection of performance data.

**State Criterion 6 – Local Criteria**

Heritage areas in Maryland are encouraged to develop additional criteria that meet the needs of the communities within them.

**Local Criteria** – Within general guidelines established by the state, each heritage area must develop its own criteria for selecting TIAs. In addition to the state’s guidelines, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee (LESHC) weighed other factors in determining the four “first phase” TIAs. The state’s TIA requirements are as follows:

**Local Criterion 1 – Tourism Benefits**

Proposed TIAs must already be a recognized destination for visitors and have the potential to increase tourism.

**Local Criterion 2 – Readiness**

They must be able to identify projects within the TIA that are ready for implementation within five years, and these projects must be competitive with other TIA project applications submitted throughout the state.

**Local Criterion 3 – Regional Benefits**

They must support the interpretive strategy and development of the heritage area as a whole.

**Local Criterion 4 – Ability to Leverage Funds**

Candidates must be able to attract additional public and private funds in support of projects within the TIA.

**Local Criterion 5 – Regional Equity and Balance**

Proposed TIAs must be spread throughout the three-county region, and should not emphasize one type of resource at the expense of others.

**Local Criterion 6 – Political Support**

Proposed TIAs must have the backing of county and municipal officials in the region, because the powers exercised by these officials are crucial to the long-term success of any TIA.

The strongest TIA candidates are those that function as nodes of interpretation, commerce, and transportation. Sites within towns and cities have an advantage, because they already serve as nodes of economic activity, and they are well connected by roads and waterways. The success of a heritage area, however, depends just as heavily on establishing and maintaining interpretive links between

sites. Interpretive sites are connected with each other by the historical, cultural, and natural themes that they hold in common. Sites that serve as nodes in several different networks are the most likely to be strong TIA candidates. Each of the region’s TIAs should show a high potential for investment that will benefit regional tourism.

Projects within TIAs must enhance the overall quality of the area and show a significant impact on tourism development. This program is still evolving, but the goal is to layer different types of assistance to create successful projects. The sponsors of a project must show that it will leverage both private funds and local government funds. Where possible, the areas designated as TIAs should also overlap with areas designated by other programs.

The LESHCH Planning Committee used a rigorous and participatory review process to determine the TIAs proposed for recognition in this plan. Each county formed its own committee, and each committee met several times to vet different candidates for TIAs and to make recommendations to the Planning Committee. Candidates for later nomination are noted here, and a process is set forth for amending this plan to designate additional TIAs.

### **Proposed Target Investment Areas**

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area proposes four TIAs for designation in the first round:

- TIA 1     **Salisbury Crescent**
- TIA 2     **Princess Anne**
- TIA 3     **Downtown Ocean City**
- TIA 4     **Pocomoke City**

These proposed TIAs have the potential to support projects that advance the development of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area and to address the state’s goals for this program. The projects outlined in this chapter were selected based on the criteria discussed above, as presented in detail in the following sections describing these TIAs.

#### **TIA 1**

### **Salisbury Crescent**

The Salisbury Crescent TIA was conceived by Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee representatives from Wicomico County as a way to link several different interpretive resources in the Salisbury area. This concept is intended to encourage heritage tourism and the support needed for economic development in the historic downtown. The goal of the crescent is to create an “umbrella” for



joint economic development, interpretive planning, and marketing among municipal and interpretive partners.

Geographically, the crescent extends along the Wicomico River from Pemberton Historical Park southwest of Salisbury to the city’s eastern border. The proposed TIA is split into three discontinuous areas. (See Target Investment Area 1 map and maps A, B, and C.) In addition to these three areas, other areas within the crescent may eventually be proposed for designation as a part of this TIA.

The three areas of the Salisbury Crescent proposed for designation in this round are centered on Pemberton Historical Park and the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art, two critical sites associated with the heritage area’s interpretive themes. The downtown Salisbury portion of the TIA focuses on the Charles H. Chipman Cultural Center and Poplar Hill Mansion, among other sites. The Chipman Center is a premier site for interpreting regional cultural traditions and for presenting the traditional arts, especially music.

Salisbury provides important visitor services and amenities for all of these sites and they are linked by the nearly complete Salisbury Urban Greenway (now called the Salisbury Crescent Heritage Greenway) through the city. Poplar Hill Mansion is located within the historic district of which the Chipman Center is also a part. In addition, the area includes Salisbury’s City Park, the acclaimed Salisbury Zoo, and the Wicomico County Civic Center. The “Salisbury Crescent” follows the Eastern Prong and main stem of the historic Wicomico River, the “waterway main street” that created Salisbury and Wicomico County.

The Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art will serve as the heritage area’s first Regional Interpretive Center, an important step in implementing the goals of this plan. This center will explain the importance of the heritage area themes and provide an explanation of the region’s historical context. It will also introduce the system of attractions, historic communities, and scenic roads that link the heritage area together.

Pemberton Historical Park is another critical component of this strategy, because it is the only historic site on the Delmarva peninsula where visitors can experience what life was like on an eighteenth-century plantation. Three of the plantation’s original property boundaries are still intact today. Both of these sites are among the four central, well-developed museum sites selected for early action under the regional interpretive strategy. For more information, see Chapter 4 (Interpretation).

The Charles H. Chipman Center on Broad Street in downtown Salisbury occupies a building that was originally designed as a one-story meetinghouse for the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. The building was built in 1838 as a site for religious services and a day school. The second story was added between 1886

and 1889. Dr. and Mrs. Charles H. Chipman, well-known African-American educators, later donated the building to a non-profit foundation. The building now serves as an interpretive and cultural arts center, a rental facility, and meeting place for the entire community.

As stated in a recent application to Maryland's new Community Legacy program, "Salisbury's – and Wicomico's – inheritance from the past is a matter of great community pride." Significant planning has recently gone into revitalizing the downtown, a key feature among the many important community development projects proposed in the Community Legacy application. The application also says:

"The compelling vision which the Community Legacy Plan implements is that of a Salisbury Urban Core which brims with vital business, residential and service life, the synergy of a successful multicultural gathering place, the establishment of growing attractiveness for investment and the creation of healthful 24-hour activity. The Salisbury Urban Core is in this way envisioned as an urbane capital for Lower Delmarva at its regional crossroads of U.S. Routes 13 and 50. This crossroads, including the historic Wicomico River, is the heart and core of our community legacy in every sense."

Activities that support the Salisbury Crescent TIA include:

**Wicomico Riverfront Revitalization** – A review of the city's Riverfronts Redevelopment Plan and associated zoning, combined with discussion with neighborhood and business groups, has resulted in emerging proposals for a farmers market, festival place, and lodging facilities on key riverfront sites designated for revitalization by the Salisbury City Council.



The drawbridge in Salisbury, Wicomico County, is located on a part of the Wicomico River that has the potential for additional waterfront development. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Maryland Main Street Community** – Downtown Salisbury earned a designation as one of Maryland’s ten Main Street communities in May 2001.

**Urban Salisbury, Inc.** – A new 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization has been formed as a public-private partnership for revitalization and reinvestment in the urban core. This organization joins several community groups and organizations together, including:

**Business** – Greater Salisbury Committee, Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce, others

**Residential Neighborhoods** – Several neighborhoods in Salisbury

**Institutions** – Charles H. Chipman Cultural Center

**Government** – Wicomico County City of Salisbury

In June 2001, with the help of consultant HyettPalma and the National League of Cities, this partnership completed a detailed market analysis and action agenda under the “America Downtown – New Thinking, New Life” program.

**Wicomico County Rural Greenways Plan** – Completed in July 2001 by the county’s Department of Parks and Recreation, the Rural Greenways plan establishes community-endorsed greenway routes throughout the entire 377-square mile land area of Wicomico County. The system focuses on hubs at Pemberton Historical Park and the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art. These rural greenways are designed to reinforce smart growth initiatives and to reinforce and connect with the Salisbury Crescent Heritage Greenway along the Wicomico River.

**Business Retention Efforts** – Business retention efforts and other programs will address declining retail usage in Salisbury, especially ground floor uses within the downtown Main Street area. Approximately fifteen vital retail uses exist within this area, and several report good sales. Within and adjacent to the downtown area, however, there has been a trend toward the loss of existing businesses. Approximately one dozen businesses have relocated out of downtown within the past year.

Public and private groups are working to counter this trend with public improvements, downtown marketing and promotion, and an effective economic development program for developing underutilized properties. Recent inventories of downtown properties and collection of other key data will allow close monitoring of progress. A public-private methodology will be established to define development opportunities and attract developers and businesses. In addition, the city and county are seeking ways to accommodate

a suitable presence by Salisbury University in the heart of downtown Salisbury. Specific goals will also include developing a Chesapeake Bay-style inn and meeting room facility, with a dock on the Wicomico River connecting it to downtown Salisbury.

**Salisbury Comprehensive Plan Update** – This document will include review of the city’s current Metro Core Plan as well as its current zoning ordinance. The review will involve the Mayor and City Council, the Salisbury/Wicomico Planning Commission and neighborhood groups. The update will selectively focus on land-use planning issues; the character and potential of key residential, commercial, and industrial areas; and guidelines and directions for Smart Growth. It will provide inventories of key conditions, visions, goals, policies, and standards; revitalization concepts for selected areas; future land use and transportation planning elements; and economic development recommendations.

**Smart Growth Initiatives** – The city and county are working together to:

- Implement a number of Smart Growth initiatives;
- Create multi-cultural gathering opportunities, heritage sites and festivals;
- Address poor traffic and circulation conditions due to congestion, poor signalization, restrictive access, insufficient pedestrian crossings, and inadequate river crossing capacity; and
- Involve a greater variety of developers and investors in the project area, based on use of Request-for-Proposal methods for property disposition, marketing, and revitalization.

In addition, a “smart growth permitting” effort is now underway to create a better environment and more streamlined development permitting procedures for several types of projects. This effort involves the city and county administrations (Salisbury/Wicomico Planning and Zoning and the Public Works Departments of the city and county), the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Salisbury Committee, and the Eastern Shore Contractors Association.

**Criterion 1**  
**Private Investment**

**Development Activity 1**

Construction of buildings to enhance Pemberton Historical Park

**Project Sponsors**

Pemberton Hall Foundation

Wicomico County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

**Project Type**

Design and construction

**Total Development Cost**

\$100,000

**Source of Funds**

MHAA grant funds, private donations, public and foundation grants, and in-kind match

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Construction to enhance an existing anchor within the TIA and within the heritage area as a whole

**Feasibility Studies**

Not applicable

**Project Description**

The project includes reconstruction of a milk house and the building of ghost-framed structures (including a smoke house, corn crib, and slave quarters) to illustrate previously demolished structures. It also proposes the construction of an enclosed addition to provide a gathering area for visitors, an open-walled addition to cover an information kiosk, and a stable.

**Development Activity 2**

New hydraulic elevator to serve the Charles H. Chipman Center

**Project Sponsor**

The Chipman Foundation, Inc.

**Project Type**

Building infrastructure upgrade

**Total Development Cost**

\$75,000

**Source of Funds**

MHAA grant funds, private donations, state and foundation grants, City of Salisbury, admissions, and in-kind match

**Anchor or infill facilities**

Addition to an anchor facility

**Feasibility Studies**

Not completed

**Project Description**

The Chipman Center lacks accessibility for audiences unable to mount the stairs to its second-floor performance space. This project would add the necessary elevator. A study is required to determine how this elevator can be added to the fabric of this historic building.

**Development Activity 3**

African-American Interpretive Center and Living History Museum

**Project Sponsor**

The Chipman Foundation, Inc.

**Project Type**

Building acquisition and development

**Total Development Cost**

\$118,500

**Source of Funds**

MHAA grant funds, private donations, state and foundation grants, City of Salisbury, admissions, and in-kind match

**Anchor or infill facilities**

Addition to an anchor facility

**Feasibility Studies**

Not applicable

**Project Description**

The Chipman Foundation proposes to purchase the parsonage next door to the center to create more office, storage, and interpretive space.

**Development Activity 4**

Regional Interpretive Center at the Ward Museum

**Project Sponsor**

Ward Museum of Waterfowl Art

**Project Type**

A pavilion or enclosed area to serve as a Regional Interpretive Center, classroom, birding center, and an area for docents to conduct educational programs

**Total Development Cost**

\$85,000

**Source of Funds**

MHAA grant, federal grants, private donations, and public grants

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Addition to an anchor facility

**Feasibility Studies**

On a site visit in May 2001, a team from the National Endowment for the Humanities concluded that:

“the museum has been a pioneer in the state’s cultural community. It has been successful in designing content-rich experiences that reach out to the community and expand the idea of ‘place’ and heritage as well as appealing to the rapidly expanding field of cultural tourism... Marketing, when coupled with other initiatives in ecotourism, will help the museum to become a regional cultural center for Chesapeake Bay life and heritage. The consultants believe that marketing will help the museum speak to diverse public audiences.”

**Project Description**

The Lower Eastern Shore’s first Regional Interpretive Center will be created within the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art or in a kiosk located adjacent to the building. This kiosk or education pavilion will include discussion of the region as a whole and the heritage area themes. This area within the museum or on its grounds will also provide a forum for activities focused on the marshland habitat that is adjacent to the plantation. Heron, egrets, waterfowl, songbirds, and birds of prey all make their home in this marshland habitat located only minutes from highways and commercial development.

**Criterion 2**

**Program Incentives**

All of these sites are committed to expanding their interpretation to encompass the goals of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, and will continue to invest in programs that broaden the audience for heritage tourism. The Salisbury/Wicomico Planning and Zoning Department’s Community Development Division prepares and administers loan and grant applications for housing, as well as for commercial, and institutional projects in the city and county. It is expected that carefully targeted loan and grant initiatives will become an even more important part of the Salisbury/Wicomico Community and Economic Development program. The Division works with Federal Funding Opportunities in economic development

through the Rural Development Division of the United States Department of Agriculture.

State and federal agencies and programs that will support this TIA include:

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
  - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Programs
- Main Street Maryland Program
  - Main Street Improvement Program
- Maryland Special Loan Programs for Housing Rehabilitation
- Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED)
  - Community Development Block Grants for Economic Development (CDBG-ED)
- Neighborhood Business Development Program (NBDP)
- Rural Business Opportunity Grants
- Program Open Space Funding
- Salisbury Neighborhood Community Mini-Grant Program
- Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Programs
- Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits
- Office Community Space Conversion Initiative
- Maryland Department of Transportation/State Highway Administration
  - U.S. Route 13 Business Streetscape and Beautification Program
- Maryland Department of Transportation
  - Transit Oriented Development District (under development)
- City of Salisbury Mayor and City Council Riverfronts Redevelopment Plan
- Salisbury University Development Program
- University of Maryland–Eastern Shore Rural Development Corporation

### Criterion 3

#### **Revitalization Designations**

The boundary of the Salisbury Crescent has been designed to overlap with several economic development, neighborhood revitalization, and historic preservation designations within the City of Salisbury. These include the Salisbury Enterprise Zone; the Newtown, Downtown, and Camden Local Historic Districts; the Maryland Main Street Program project area; and Priority Funding Areas and Community Legacy areas within the City of Salisbury (as designated by the State of Maryland).

### Criterion 4

#### **Economic Development Resources**

A major downtown revitalization program is now underway in the Salisbury Crescent. A new public-private revitalization corporation, called Urban Salisbury,



Inc., has been formed with substantial private business community support. A market analysis of the project area has been completed by HyettPalma and the National League of Cities. A new Flamingo Pavilion is being contributed to the Salisbury Zoo by Bovis Leasing Corporation.

Planning is underway to sponsor major promotional events and festivals throughout the crescent. This trend is illustrated by a recent visit to the downtown Wicomico riverfront by the *Maryland Dove*, a reproduction of a seventeenth-century sailing ship called a pinnacle, which brought the first European settlers to Maryland. Planning will be undertaken for an expanded Salisbury Festival to bring additional visitors to the greenways, interpretive resources, and attractions throughout the Salisbury Crescent.

The following are critical economic development initiatives that will support private investment in this TIA:

**Lighting Improvements** – Decorative lighting will be installed in historic downtown Salisbury in accordance with historic design and public safety standards.

**Street Trees** – New street trees will be planted in the area. Street trees act as a buffer for pedestrians, protect the environmental and serve as a habitat for wildlife. Neighborhood residents will develop a tree-planting program in partnership with the City. Locations and species will be chosen as part of a consensus-building process designed to express the unique and best character of the neighborhood.

**Downtown Farmers Market** – A downtown farmers market will be developed as a people-gathering place.

**Boat Rentals** – Using economic development funding, the county and city will partner with a private company to provide paddle boats, kayaks, and canoes along the various branches and prongs of the Wicomico River extending to the Brew River Restaurant and the North Prong development area, creating these opportunities as a heritage tourism initiative.

**Tourist Launch or Water Taxi** – The city and county will investigate the feasibility of creating a water taxi that links the Main Street Landing in Salisbury, Handy's Landing waterfront site at Pemberton Historical Park, and the historic Wicomico River village (and ferry landing) of Whitehaven.

**Salisbury Crescent TIA** – The downtown Salisbury component of the Salisbury Crescent TIA focuses on the Boulevard Theater, the Charles Chipman Cultural, and Poplar Hill Mansion. A development and revitalization project will bring new retail and related development to the new Transit-

Oriented Development District (TODD) located in the Boulevard Theater area at the southwest quadrant of the crossroads intersection of U.S. Route 50 and U.S. Route 13 Business. This is in many ways the most powerful single site for future successful heritage and related community development which the downtown has.

The vision for connecting the Boulevard Theater, Chipman Center, and Poplar Hill includes landscaping, street trees, and appropriate streetscape elements. These improvements will be made to East Main Street; U.S. Route 13 Business from Main to Broad Streets, including the bridge across U.S. Route 50; and the area from the Chipman Center and Boundless Playground to Poplar Hill Avenue. These improvements will create an easy and enjoyable stroll through an historic neighborhood to Poplar Hill Mansion.

**Urban Greenway Extension** – The city and county will seek to complete the Urban Greenway link between its current terminus in City Park at Maryland Route 12 by carrying it across East Main Street to the pedestrian tunnel through the railroad embankment and from there across Maryland Route 13B by the Boulevard Theater. This block of East Main Street between Maryland Routes 12 and 13B will be decorated with new flagpoles, pennants and banners, signage, and a small information kiosk.

**City Park Restoration** – The city and county will restore the band pavilion and wooden bridge in City Park. A program will be initiated to encourage the placement of innovative sculpture and decoration to further animate this popular park.

**East Main Street Revitalization** – Seed money for loans will be identified to help new businesses locate and build in this eastern part of downtown Salisbury. Selective streetscape improvements will also be made.

**U. S. Route 50 Improvements** – Through signage and banners, the city and county will clarify the route between U.S. Route 50 and downtown Salisbury.

## Criterion 5 **Data Collection**

Expanded interpretation at the Ward Museum and Pemberton Historical Park will entice day trippers and local residents to expand their travel plans to include additional interpretive sites throughout the region. Many visitors to these sites are not aware that the region offers additional attractions that interpret the natural, historic, and cultural heritage of the Lower Eastern Shore. At the Ward Museum and Pemberton Historical Park, the number of visitors who request information

about other interpretive sites in the heritage area can be tracked to determine the impact of heritage area kiosks and interpretive displays.

**Criterion 6**  
**Local Criteria**

The Ward Museum and Pemberton Historical Park, were chosen for their readiness to accommodate expanded interpretation within existing facilities, and for their potential to expand when funds are made available for that purpose. Both of these sites provide interpretation that explains the significance of the heritage area themes. The Chipman Center is a heritage site close to the downtown, reinforcing that important area of the city, and further is leader in efforts to interpret and encourage cultural traditions. It is also one of the premier African American sites in the heritage area. All three have the advantage of being among the community’s best-known and appreciated sites.

**TIA 2**  
**Princess Anne**

The Princess Anne Historic District, with its existing boundaries, is proposed for recognition as a TIA. This district comprises an area of 150 acres with about 300 contributing historic resources. It contains the Littleton Long House, a historic building that now serves as a meeting space and offices for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee. Central to this district is Teackle Mansion, one of four interpretive sites designated for early action and promotion as part of the regional interpretive strategy. Additional information about this strategy can be found in Chapter 4 (Interpretation). The mansion is also the anchor for the town’s self-guided walking tour.

The Town of Princess Anne was created by an act of Maryland’s General Assembly in 1733. Located at the narrow point on the Manokin River known as the



The wooden and stone details on the Teackle Mansion in Princess Anne, Somerset County, reveal a high level of craftsmanship. Exterior restoration of the property, which has already begun, will continue as funds become available. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

“wading place,” the land was conveniently suited for the purposes of a centrally located town in Somerset County. Twenty-five acres of David Brown’s Beckford plantation were purchased and divided into thirty equal lots. Bridge Street (now Somerset Avenue) served as the main north/south avenue.

During the nineteenth century, the town expanded beyond its eighteenth-century limits to become the commercial center of the region. Its main industries were shipping and agriculture. Princess Anne is distinguished by Federal-period houses, mid-to-late nineteenth-century Victorian houses, and early twentieth-century commercial buildings on Main Street. Much of the Town of Princess Anne is included in a National Register Historic District. In addition, many property owners voluntarily participate in an informal design review process associated with the locally designated historic district whose boundaries are the same as the TIA designation.

The University of Maryland-Eastern Shore (UMES), which is located on the outskirts of town, was founded in 1886 to educate African Americans in the region. Today, it is a major regional institution for higher learning. Seventeen new programs have been added over the past few years, including hospitality management training, aviation science, and physical therapy. In recent years, the university has won several awards for “most beautiful” campus. University activities attract large numbers of out-of-town visitors. While UMES is located outside the proposed TIA, the university offers a number of programs that have already benefited the heritage area. As the heritage area matures, the university hopes to receive additional assistance to undertake and expand these programs.

In 2000, Princess Anne underwent a Main Street renovation project that included new brick sidewalks, street lighting, and landscaping of the Somerset Avenue business district. Future projects could extend these improvements to the remainder of the historic district, particularly on Prince William Street, which leads to the Teackle Mansion.

**Criterion 1**  
**Private Investment**

**Development Activity 1**

Rewiring of the Teackle Mansion and installation of a geothermal system to heat and cool the building

**Project Sponsor**  
Teackle Mansion

**Project Type**  
Infrastructure

**Total Development Cost**

\$450,000-500,000

**Source of Funds**

Legislative bond bill, MHAA grant, application to the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of “America’s Treasures”

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Anchor

**Feasibility Studies**

Many previous studies have been undertaken to determine conservation needs for the Teackle Mansion, and the building is one of the best-documented sites in Somerset County.

**Project Description**

The purpose of this project is to create a more stable environment within the mansion, so that deterioration from aging can be slowed, and so that the mansion can be opened for events during the winter months. After a climate control system has been installed in the mansion, the Somerset County Historical Society plans to undertake a paint and plaster restoration of the building, focusing first on the parlor and front hall, and then continuing to other rooms at an estimated cost of \$30,000 per room. As these rooms are completed, they would be opened to visitors.

In addition to the improvements described above, the Somerset County Historical Society plans to undertake the following activities at Teackle Mansion:

1. **Develop the Mansion as an Interpretive Site** – This would include docent recruitment and training; period costumes (circa 1820); appropriate docent scripts; exhibits that tell the story of Princess Anne and Somerset County; a part-time coordinator for volunteer activities; and longer opening hours to increase the number of visitors.
2. **Hire a Resident Director** – This person would have fundraising and museum development experience.
3. **Open a Tea and Gift Shop** – This shop would support museum efforts.
4. **Build an Interpretive Facility for Schoolchildren** – A new facility is planned for an existing building acquired at the rear of the property, where school children will be welcomed and where educational presentations would be staged for visitors before they enter the mansion. It would also be used to store museum artifacts.

**Development Activity 2**

Business development program to attract visitors to downtown Princess Anne

**Project Sponsor**

Town of Princess Anne and Chamber of Commerce

**Project Type**

Design, business development, and marketing

**Total Development Cost**

\$50,000

**Source of Funds**

Rural Development Center, Town of Princess Anne, and MHAA grant.

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Not applicable

**Feasibility Studies**

None have been undertaken

**Project Description**

Farmers' Market and other development on Somerset Avenue

For this project, the Town of Princess Anne and the Chamber of Commerce will:

1. **Expand and Promote the Farmers' Market** – This new facility opened in the summer of 2001.
2. **Establish a Collectors' Market** – This market would operate within the municipal parking lot at Washington and Somerset Avenues. Together with the Farmers' Market, this additional market would draw visitors through the commercial district on Saturdays.
3. **Improve Signage on Somerset Avenue** – Businesses on this street should be identified with historically-inspired signs that are readily identifiable to visitors.
4. **Hire a Market Coordinator** – A market coordinator will be hired to recruit vendors and promote the Farmers' Market and Collectors' Market across the region.

- 5. Promote Lodging and Dining** – The town will encourage the development of bed & breakfast establishments and restaurants that cater to visitors.

**Development Activity 3**

Town staff person for event coordination and volunteer recruitment

**Project Sponsor**

Town of Princess Anne and Chamber of Commerce

**Project Type**

Event development and marketing

**Total Development Cost**

\$25,000

**Source of Funds**

Town of Princess Anne

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Not applicable

**Feasibility Studies**

None have been undertaken

**Project Description**

The Town of Princess Anne will hire an event planner and volunteer coordinator who can organize existing and create new events to draw visitors to town, and organize bus tours. Currently, the Chamber puts on two major event: a Christmas parade in December, and a Spring Street Festival in May. On the day of the Christmas parade, the town sponsors “Christmas in the Park” for children. In addition, a series of events called “Olde Princess Anne Days” is held annually in October. This activity, which is organized by the Somerset County Historical Society, includes a house tour.

Although these three events (the parade, festival, and Olde Princess Anne Days) draw 5,000 people annually, there has been little annual planning to coordinate volunteer recruitment or marketing for these events. There are enormous potential benefits that could be gained by adding a paid coordinator to town staff. This position would help to mobilize the community in support of these events, and help to initiate new events. An artists’ market is one such idea.

**Development Activity 4**

Streetscaping on Prince William Street, which connects the Teackle Mansion with downtown Princess Anne

**Project Sponsor**

Town of Princess Anne

**Project Type**

Infrastructure

**Total Development Cost**

To be determined

**Source of Funds**

Town of Princess Anne

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Not applicable

**Feasibility Studies**

None have been undertaken

**Project Description**

This project would involve landscaping, lighting, and repaving of Prince William Street. Although some improvements have already been made as part of a streetscaping initiative, additional work needs to be done. In particular, sidewalks must be safer for visitors. One way to accomplish this goal is to bury phone and electric lines beneath the street.

**Development Activity 5**

Development of the Burgess Americana Museum, including the purchase of the Beckford Estate and relocation of the American Collection to the existing farmhouse

**Project Sponsor**

Somerset County Commissioners and Somerset Historical Trust

**Project Type**

Interpretive site development

**Total Development Cost**

To be determined

**Source of Funds**

Somerset County



**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Anchor

**Feasibility Studies**

This project is currently in the planning stages.

**Project Description**

This project would involve the cataloguing of the collection and the creation of interpretive exhibits. To achieve optimum visitation, this facility should be located on U.S. Route 13.

**Development Activity 6**

Visitor Information Center, genealogical library, and history collection at old library building on Prince William Street

**Project Sponsor**

Somerset County Library and Somerset County Historical Society

**Project Type**

Interpretive site development

**Total Development Cost**

To be determined

**Source of Funds**

Somerset County

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Anchor

**Feasibility Studies**

None have been undertaken

**Project Description**

This project would involve the purchase and renovation of the old library building (a nineteenth-century structure) to create a Visitor Information Center and Old Somerset interpretive exhibit. This facility would include a computer with genealogical research information and old maps of the region.

**Criterion 2**

**Program Incentives**

Teackle Mansion, a highly significant early nineteenth-century building in the heart of Princess Anne, is a key tourism site in Somerset County. As such, its enhancement will better enable it to fulfill its mission to preserve and exhibit

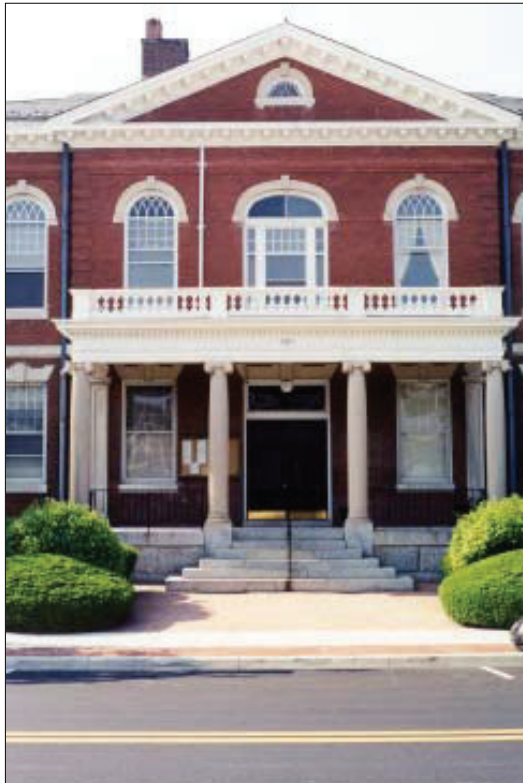
Somerset County history and memorabilia. In addition to its history, its location adjacent to the U.S Route 13 corridor makes it ideally suited to attract visitors. The mansion is also the focus of Olde Princess Anne Days, an annual event held on the second weekend of October. This festival raises public awareness about ongoing efforts to preserve the mansion and other historic sites throughout the county. The owner of the property, a non-profit organization, is in need of funds for restoration of the building and programming within it. It is believed that a wide variety of other funding is available to support initiatives described here, well beyond the stimulus possible from MHAA funding and incentives.

**Criterion 3**  
**Revitalization Designations**

The Town of Princess Anne is a Smart Growth Investment Zone and its potential has been recognized by other state-sponsored programs. The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has designated Princess Anne as a Revitalization Area and the Department of Business and Economic Development has designated it as an Enterprise Zone. The town has also been recognized as a Priority Funding Area by the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP).

**Criterion 4**  
**Economic Development Resources**

The Town of Princess Anne and the Somerset County Commissioners are strongly supportive of the plans put forth by the Somerset County Historical Society as well as the Somerset County Historical Trust, another preservation organization. The Somerset County Historical Trust has sponsored a five-year restoration of the Littleton Long House, which is also located in Princess Anne. The Somerset County Historical Trust, the Somerset County Historical Society, and the Friends of Teackle Mansion have raised considerable private sums in the pursuit of their stated preservation and tourism goals. The Somerset County Commissioners are also in the planning stages of



The Somerset County Courthouse in Princess Anne is an excellent example of a colonial-revival public building constructed at the turn of the twentieth century. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

establishing a site for the Burgess Americana Museum, the contents of which have been acquired by the county. A future site in Princess Anne is a distinct possibility. The program support contemplated by the Town of Princess Anne for business development and event and volunteer coordination is an excellent example of strategic use of local resources aimed at making the most of existing assets.

### **Criterion 5**

#### **Data Collection**

Steady demand for the Teackle Mansion as a venue for local events reflects the building's high profile in the community. Rehabilitation of the building will result in increased usage that will have a measurable economic impact on the Town of Princess Anne. An increase in the number of visitors touring the mansion and the number of groups utilizing the mansion and grounds will provide an adequate measure of the economic impact generated by the proposed TIA.

### **Criterion 6**

#### **Local Criteria**

This is a highly visible site in downtown Princess Anne, and is clearly one of the most architecturally significant buildings in Somerset County. Its close proximity to the commercial heart of Princess Anne gives it an excellent chance to attract additional visitors and benefit downtown businesses. Local leaders are united in their support for the rehabilitation of the mansion into a better-known interpretive resource and the pursuit of other initiatives to improve the entire town as a visitor destination.

It cannot have escaped the reader of the "return on investment" statistics presented earlier in this chapter, or the heritage tourism statistics presented in Chapter 5, Heritage Tourism and Visitor Services, that Somerset County has a small base of tourism on which to build. The county has made recent and impressive progress in changing the "trajectory" of its tourism growth (which cannot be reflected in the return on investment calculation). This progress will reach some natural limits unless attractions grow or new ones are developed (such as the nature education center suggested for Somerset County in Chapter 4, Interpretation and Education, or the Burgess Americana Collection described below). These attractions will then stimulate the growth of tourism-based businesses that will translate into greater economic benefits for the county. The LESHC is committed to partnering with Somerset County leaders and organizations to tackle this challenge, starting with the decision to designate this TIA. Princess Anne, anchored currently by Teackle Mansion with others possible, represents one of the best opportunities in the county to grow into a year-round attraction or destination; even now, casual visitors find their way to this charming location with only modest programming and marketing. The group of programs offered

here promises to stimulate a favorable level of tourism growth in Princess Anne while enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

### **TIA 3**

## **Downtown Ocean City**

Downtown Ocean City is an area targeted for redevelopment by the Ocean City Development Corporation (OCDC) because of its older buildings and convenience to Ocean City's boardwalk, one of the busiest tourist areas in the city. The proposed TIA encompasses three blocks near the southern end of Ocean City, an area about 700 feet by 300 feet on approximately 4.8 acres. Its boundaries run along Talbot Street, Dorchester Street, and Somerset Street between the boardwalk and Baltimore Avenue. Its location allows it to capitalize on Ocean City's two primary attractions, the beach and the boardwalk. The area's designation as a TIA and its proposed improvements are designed to attract pedestrians. The designation may ultimately affect buildings and neighborhoods beyond the proposed TIA.

OCDC wishes to promote this area because it contains some of the oldest buildings in Ocean City, representing the turn-of-the-century seaside architecture that once was common in the city. Buildings designed in this style generally have pitched roofs (both gable and hipped), decorative carpentry, and light-colored paint schemes.

Ocean City is a key site in the interpretive scheme for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. This plan calls for it to create a Regional Interpretive Center that introduces residents and visitors to the heritage area and its interpretive themes. Interpretive and directional information about the heritage area and about downtown Ocean City will first be made available to visitors through the use of a kiosk. This kiosk will eventually be augmented by an indoor facility with more extensive interpretation. Presenting this information in a central location will encourage visitors to travel



The Life-Saving Station Museum in Ocean City, Worcester County, tells the story of the city's transformation from a small seaside community into one of the region's most visited destinations. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

to other locations within the heritage area. Visitors who find this TIA and its celebration of Ocean City's heritage to be appealing will also be a prime market for programs offered by other interpretive resources within the heritage area.

One of the city blocks included in the proposed TIA may become the home of an interpretive center that directly benefits the heritage area. TIA designation would boost efforts to re-establish downtown Ocean City as an area distinct from the rest of the island. Matching funds are already available for this project. Eventually, OCDC and the Town of Ocean City hope to create an intermodal vehicle system with water taxis, boats to Assateague Island, and a bicycle path.

#### Criterion 1

### **Private Investment**

This TIA has several mutually reinforcing development goals. It aims to:

**Improve Existing Properties** – Improve existing, aging properties in a manner that is appropriate to the character of historic downtown Ocean City.

**Enhance the Mix of Property Types** – Enhance and expand the current mix of commercial and retail offerings in the downtown area.

**Increase Pedestrian Traffic** – Increase pedestrian traffic between the boardwalk and inner blocks.

**Provide Incentives for Visitors** – Give visitors an incentive to visit interpretive resources throughout the heritage area.

**Promote Design Guidelines** – Encourage all new development to adhere to design guidelines that promote traditional Ocean City architectural styles.

Development activity in this area is largely oriented to publicly-funded improvements. Recent and future activities include:

**Boardwalk and Gateway Improvements** – Boardwalk improvements are planned, and a gateway arch has been constructed on North Division Street, just north of the proposed TIA.

**Streetscape Improvements** – Streetscape improvements are planned for Somerset Street, one of three east-west streets encompassed by the proposed TIA (and a model for other improvements).

**Tourism Information Kiosk** – A tourism information kiosk is proposed for installation.

**Façade Improvement Program** – An existing façade improvement program will be expanded. The program has already applied for other state funding.

The public investments described above are predicted to lead to private investment that, while incremental in nature, will improve the overall appearance and quality of commercial offerings in this area.

**Development Activity 1** (Completed in June 2000)

Boardwalk improvements

**Project Sponsors**

Boardwalk Redevelopment Association  
Town of Ocean City

**Project Type**

Infrastructure

**Total Development Cost**

\$4 million (approximate)

**Sources of Funds**

Town of Ocean City and state transportation funds

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Not applicable

**Feasibility Studies**

None have been undertaken

**Project Description**

On the east side of the proposed TIA, the Town of Ocean City completed extensive boardwalk improvements in June 2000. This project included road reconstruction, decorative surfacing, lighting, and landscaping. Boardwalk trams were given a dedicated lane separate from pedestrian areas. The project also involved accessibility improvements and direct pedestrian linkages to the inner blocks of the downtown area. Across North Division Street, a decorative archway was constructed to welcome visitors to the beach, which is the primary reason they travel to Ocean City. This project increased the use of the boardwalk as one of the community's principal assets.

**Development Activity 2** (Current)

Model Street Project on Somerset Street (to be completed in Spring 2002)

**Project Sponsor**

OCDC and Town of Ocean City

**Project Type**

Infrastructure

**Total Development Cost**

\$280,000

**Source of Funds**

Town of Ocean City (for construction); OCDC and Rural Development Center at University of Maryland, Eastern Shore (for design)

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Not applicable

**Feasibility Studies**

None have been undertaken

**Project Description**

This project will create a pedestrian corridor on Somerset Street between the boardwalk and Baltimore Avenue. The existing roadway will be removed, together with 11 public parking spaces. In its place, brick pavers will be installed, and decorative lighting, bollards, and landscaping will be used to create the appearance of an open plaza. The project also features the construction of a terraced walkway from the boardwalk to the downtown area, opening sightlines and pathways to the inner blocks of the proposed TIA. Additional pedestrian traffic on this street will improve its economic vitality, because this street and several surrounding blocks are currently underserved as a retail corridor.

**Development Activity 3 (Proposed)**

Regional Interpretive Center Kiosk for Somerset Street

**Project Sponsor**

OCDC and Town of Ocean City

**Project Type**

Infrastructure

**Total Development Cost**

\$40,000

**Source of Funds**

MHAA grant; OCDC

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Anchor

**Feasibility Studies**

Landscape architectural work

**Project Description**

Downtown Ocean City is slated to become one of the heritage area's three Regional Interpretive Centers. Although the development of an indoor facility for this center is a future goal, there is a more immediate need to build an informational kiosk to highlight the attractions, historic communities, and scenic roads throughout the heritage area. Somerset Street, currently under development as a "model street" for future Ocean City road projects, will be the site of this kiosk. In addition to serving the needs of the heritage area as a whole, the kiosk will also educate residents and visitors about activities and programs in downtown Ocean City.

**Development Activity 4 (Current/Proposed)**

Facade Improvement Program

**Project Sponsor**

Ocean City Development Corporation  
Private property owners

**Project Type**

Building facade and storefront rehabilitation/renovation

**Total Development Cost**

\$100,000 (estimated) for grant funding in the next round

**Source of Funds**

DHCD, MHAA grant, private property owners, OCDC

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Infill

**Feasibility Studies**

Local architect has provided several designs and cost estimates for specific buildings.

**Project Description**

Facade improvements will add to an appealing pedestrian environment that benefits the commercial potential of downtown Ocean City. Through the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, OCDC has received facade improvement funds in the amount of \$50,000 for five



buildings within the proposed TIA. Additional funding would allow this program to extend its benefits to other buildings.

**Development Activity 5 (Proposed)**

Streetscape improvements to Talbot and Dorchester Streets

**Project Sponsor**

OCDC and Town of Ocean City

**Project Type**

Infrastructure

**Total Development Cost**

An estimated \$100,000 per street (adjusted for inflation over a five-year period)

**Source of Funds**

To be determined

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Not applicable

**Feasibility Studies**

None have been undertaken

**Project Description**

Streetscape improvements to other east-west streets within the proposed TIA will increase the connection between the island's inner blocks and the heavy pedestrian traffic along the boardwalk.

**Criterion 2**

**Program Incentives**

To date, significant incentives have not been created to promote private reinvestment in downtown Ocean City. OCDC also recommends the use of grant funds for a facade improvement program to create an incentive for greater and more rapid private investment in the area. Facade improvements will add to an appealing pedestrian environment that can improve the commercial potential of the downtown area. The historic preservation tax credit can also help to spur building activity within the proposed TIA.

Grants from MHAA, combined with other sources of funding, would allow OCDC to expand its own grant program for property owners. The use of loans for property owners has been shown to be ineffective, because it places a heavy administrative burden on small business owners. Although OCDC is not

contemplating the use of MHAA loans from the proceeds of revenue bonds, OCDC is aware of this possibility and will monitor economic development activity within the proposed TIA with an eye toward identifying any need for such an incentive.

OCDC will seek to educate property owners individually about state and federal historic preservation tax credits and to provide technical assistance to help them obtain these credits. The Maryland Historical Trust has not yet undertaken any comprehensive historic resource survey work in downtown Ocean City. This kind of survey may help to identify a potential historic district in this part of the city. In the absence of such a survey, it would be helpful to have a designated TIA here, because it would allow non-historic structures in this area to apply for MHAA funding.

### Criterion 3

#### **Revitalization Designations**

The proposed Downtown Ocean City TIA is located within OCDC's target area, as established by Ocean City in the year 2000. This proposed TIA is also located within a Priority Funding Area and Revitalization Area as defined by the state of Maryland. In June 2001, Ocean City was also selected as an All-American City. The proposed TIA boundaries have already been included in a Community Legacy Plan completed by OCDC and submitted to the state for approval.

### Criterion 4

#### **Economic Development Resources**

OCDC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that is charged with revitalizing downtown Ocean City. Since the designation of a TIA in this area would fit in well with OCDC's mission, it has made the proposed TIA a key element of its revitalization strategy. The organization is funded by the Town of Ocean City, Worcester County, and membership dues. Its annual operational budget is expected to average \$150,000, with grant funding for projects being additional and variable from year to year. It consists of a 15-member board of directors, a full-time executive director, and a part-time administrative assistant. OCDC also retains legal counsel and consultants as needed. The organization will support the proposed TIA by administering grant applications, working with individual property owners, and acting as a liaison to the Town of Ocean City and state agencies.

OCDC is in the process of creating design review guidelines and requirements that will monitor the way that buildings can be constructed and rehabilitated within the proposed TIA and in surrounding city blocks. These guidelines will be

forwarded to the Town of Ocean City after several community meetings are held to receive public input. Other local commitments of public resources are described in Criteria 1 and 3 above.

**Criterion 5**  
**Data Collection**

The economic impact of increased visitation to downtown Ocean City can be measured by utilizing the visitation data that is already being collected there. Although no comprehensive historic resource survey has been undertaken within the boundaries of the proposed TIA, the historical significance of downtown Ocean City can be documented from available records. Additional survey data, however, would help Ocean City to point out the most significant historic resources in the downtown area, and to encourage visitors to patronize the businesses there.

**Criterion 6**  
**Local Criteria**

The proposed Downtown Ocean City TIA demonstrates a high level of readiness for utilizing the benefits of MHAA funding. The establishment of OCDC, as well as the current and proposed commitment of public funds from the Town of Ocean City, state agencies, and others, indicates that this TIA can make significant progress toward its goals within the first five years. OCDC's director has already devoted a significant amount of time toward this TIA designation and is committed to showing further leadership in making the designation an effective revitalization tool.

The proposed TIA is designed to link the heritage of Ocean City with the heritage of the region in general. As noted in other chapters of this plan, linkages are a critical element in heritage tourism marketing, and they can be expected to benefit every other community in the heritage area. Ocean City is committed to making this strategy work for the region as a whole. In addition, Ocean City is the central focus of a proposed regional tourism-transit system that will include Berlin, Snow Hill, and Pocomoke City.

Physically, downtown Ocean City is highly accessible to visitors, but the message about heritage tourism has not been as easy for visitors to find. The establishment of a TIA in this area would help to spread the word. Downtown Ocean City is an excellent representation of the turn-of-the-century heritage of the city. It is also accessible by boat to Assateague Island and the coastal bays, which allows visitors to enjoy the region's natural heritage, as well. Boosting visitors' awareness about Ocean City's heritage is a critical element in linking Ocean City to other parts of the Lower Eastern Shore.

## TIA 4 **Pocomoke City**

Pocomoke City is the southern gateway to the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, and as such, it has tremendous potential to support the goals of this plan. This plan proposes to make Pocomoke City the site of one of three Regional Interpretive Centers located in different parts of the heritage area. The other two will be located in Salisbury and Ocean City. In Pocomoke City, the Regional Interpretive Center will be a part of the Pocomoke River Discovery Center, which is currently under development. As a preliminary step toward the development of the Regional Interpretive Center within this facility, a kiosk will be constructed to promote the heritage area. Educational programming will further augment its role in providing interpretation for the heritage area as a whole.



This former automobile garage in Pocomoke City, Worcester County, will soon be transformed into the Pocomoke River Discovery Center, a significant new attraction. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

The Discovery Center has the advantage of being located on the banks of the Pocomoke River, a designated Wild and Scenic River. It is also located adjacent to a large historic district that is currently in the process of being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. With the Discovery Center as an anchor attraction, the proposed TIA stands to take optimum advantage of the benefits afforded to TIAs.

After considering the possibility that the TIA boundary follow the boundary of the town's Community Legacy application, this plan proposes a TIA boundary that matches the proposed Pocomoke City Historic District that is currently being prepared. The boundary of this district includes nearly all of Pocomoke City. The nomination is expected to be submitted in February 2002 for consideration at the May meeting of the Governor's Consulting Committee.

Criterion 1

**Private Investment**

**Development Activity 1**

Pocomoke River Discovery Center (a Regional Interpretive Center)

**Project Sponsor**

Pocomoke Marketing Partnership, Inc.

**Project Type**

Anchor

**Total Development Cost**

Initial cost of \$750,000-\$1 million; total cost expected to be \$6.5 million

**Source of Funds**

Program Open Space, \$50,000 promised to the Discovery Center Neighborhood Partnership Program by the State of Maryland; MHAA grant; Pocomoke City, Worcester County; fundraising campaign

**Anchor or Infill Facilities**

Anchor

**Feasibility Studies**

Market and Financial Study completed by Economics Research Associates (ERA) in September 1999

**Project Description**

This project proposes to convert a large early twentieth-century brick car dealership building into a center that promotes natural resource conservation and recreation along the region's waterways, especially on the Pocomoke River. As one of three Regional Interpretive Centers planned for the heritage area, the Pocomoke River Discovery Center will present heritage area themes to visitors and explain the links between the region's other attractions, historic communities, and scenic roads. A restaurant on the river is also planned. The building is in a highly visible location adjacent to Pocomoke City's famous drawbridge. Although there is currently a street between the building and the river, the city has made a commitment to vacate the street. A block away, the Mar-Va Theater represents another opportunity to promote the revitalization of downtown Pocomoke City.

Criterion 2

**Program Incentives**

As discussed in the project description above, the Pocomoke River Discovery Center has already secured funds from municipal, county, and state government. Support for the project is high in a community that needs a tourism anchor to attract more visitors to its downtown area. In addition to attracting visitors who are seeking an interpretive experience, the Discovery Center is well positioned to encourage visitors to explore the region's natural areas. Its scenic and highly visible location on the Pocomoke River makes it an excellent vantage point for promoting activities on the water.

Criterion 3

**Revitalization Designations**

The boundary of the proposed TIA coincides with those of the proposed Pocomoke City Historic District, whose nomination to the National Register is currently being prepared.

Criterion 4

**Economic Development Resources**

The property has already been purchased with Program Open Space funds. An additional \$125,000 is expected from Pocomoke City and from Worcester County. The project's total cost will come to about \$6.5 million. A full-time grant writer is now working to gather additional funds.

Criterion 5

**Data Collection**

The documentation being prepared for the proposed Pocomoke City Historic District will identify contributing and non-contributing structures within that district, whose boundaries match those of the proposed TIA. The development of the Pocomoke River Discovery Center will draw many visitors from outside of Maryland. As a result, the number of out-of-state visitors could be one measure of the center's success. Since the center will focus on the region's natural heritage, it is also likely that local businesses that promote recreation (such as canoeing outfitters) will see a measurable increase in sales.

Criterion 6

**Local Criteria**

The proposed TIA in Pocomoke City is highly accessible to visitors. There is strong community support for the restoration of the historic brick warehouse that will be the home of the Pocomoke River Discovery Center. The potential regional

benefits are evident from the town's location on U.S. Route 13, a heavily traveled highway that serves as a gateway to visitors from Virginia and points south.

(This concludes the end of descriptions of Target Investment Areas, proposed projects within them, and other discussion of ways that these TIAs have met the criteria set by the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Committee.)

## **Improving the Investment Climate for Historic Buildings and Projects that Improve Community Character**

The investment climate for the rehabilitation of historic buildings throughout the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area is generally positive, in that no one is actively discouraging such investment or, worse, tearing down or neglecting historic buildings. However, little use has been made of the principal tools for encouraging such investment thus far, the rehabilitation tax credits for commercial buildings under federal law, and for residential and commercial buildings under state law. These tax credits are described in the earlier sections of this chapter.

The reason for this lack of use appears to be principally a lack of knowledge, perhaps coupled with a reluctance to tangle with a government program, and in some cases a lack of funds for such investment. It is certainly not for lack of good examples within the region, as several are found here, especially the Atlantic Hotel, a nationally recognized early pioneer of such benefits, and the downtowns of Berlin and Salisbury. With the creation of the Lower Eastern Shore Certified Heritage Area, these tax benefits will be available to still more properties. In order to encourage property owners to take advantage of these tax benefits, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council will offer seminars for property owners, their advisers, and their lenders, and for municipal officials.

Applicants seeking approval for federal or state tax credits for historic structures must follow the procedures and criteria established by the Maryland Historical Trust. This applies to buildings throughout the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, whether in the recognized area, the certified area, or one of the areas designated for targeted investment. The process includes the submission of a three-part historic preservation certification application at appropriate points in the rehabilitation process. The Director of the Maryland Historical Trust makes all required certifications for state tax credits. For federal tax credits, available to commercial properties, the Maryland Historical Trust recommends approval and the National Park Service makes the final certification decisions.

## **Tax Credits for Rehabilitation of Certified Heritage Structures in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**

This section addresses the extension of state rehabilitation tax credits to non-historic and non-listed, non-designated historic buildings. Buildings that receive such tax credits, following the rules set forth below and in the accompanying table, are known as Certified Heritage Structures.

### **An Explanation of the Reasoning behind the Tax Credits and Standards**

Historic districts listed in the National Register and locally designated historic districts, as described in Chapter 7, Stewardship, and Target Investment Areas as described in this chapter, are places where heritage tourism is expected to take place in ways that will benefit communities. Such tourism is especially to be encouraged in Target Investment Areas. In addition, rehabilitation provides an economic benefit to the Heritage Area as described earlier in this chapter, through the construction jobs noted in Table 6.3. Thus, in general the enhancement of the overall character of these districts and areas is desirable, for all usable buildings. State tax credits for the rehabilitation of buildings without formal status as historic buildings or which are not historic are therefore extended to these buildings in the same manner as for designated historic buildings, providing they pass a number of tests, explained further below. Both commercial and residential projects might qualify, but residential projects will receive close scrutiny as they generally provide fewer economic benefits.

For non-listed, non-designated historic structures to be rehabilitated for commercial use (this applies in Target Investment Areas only), the bar is also high, as the LESHHC prefers that owners of these structures pursue both state and federal tax credits. The latter is available only if the building is actually listed in the National Register. Maryland tracks its “tax expenditures” – that is, the amount of taxes forgone as the result of the state rehabilitation tax credit. Naturally, we wish to show major beneficial revenue impacts for the state through its investment in heritage tourism in the Lower Eastern Shore Certified Heritage Area. At the same time we wish to minimize those tax expenditures that can be assigned to Certified Heritage Structure status, deploying the tax benefit in projects that will clearly benefit the Heritage Area (and the state). Projects that successfully use regular historic rehabilitation avoid tax expenditures through the CHS program. They are furthermore more financially beneficial to the region because of the federal tax benefit, which frees up funds committed by the project developer for use in other ways that may benefit the Heritage Area.

As the federal tax benefit is not available to historic residential properties, the LESHHC believes that it is to the benefit of the Heritage Area if the rehabilitation of non-listed, non-designated *residential* historic structures is encouraged by either state tax benefit. The preference of the LESHHC in these cases is to



encourage their actual listing in the National Register for the tax-expenditure reason explained above. We recognize, however, that there may be mitigating factors that should be taken into account in allowing CHS status for residential historic properties.

Only the state tax benefit is available to non-historic Certified Heritage Structures. Under Maryland rules governing heritage areas, we are allowed to extend this benefit to structures within and outside Target Investment Areas, so long as they are within the Certified Heritage Area, and we have done so. However, we believe that those projects undertaken outside Target Investment Areas have a higher responsibility to demonstrate a benefit to the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area.

### **Definitions**

**A listed or designated historic structure** are is a structure that is:

- Listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
- Designated as a historic property under local law; or
- Located in either a National Register listed or a locally designated historic district with Certified Local Government status (see Chapter 7) and certified as contributing to the significance of the district by either the Director of the Maryland Historical Trust (in the case of National Register district listings) or local planning authorities (in the case of locally designated historic districts).

**A non-listed, non-designated historic structure** is a structure not currently listed but eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places; or a contributing resource within a National Register-eligible district.

**A non-historic structure** is a structure that is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places individually or as part of a district; is not a contributing resource within a National Register historic district; is not a contributing resource within a locally designated historic district; and is not individually designated as a historic property under local law.

### **Non-Historic Certified Heritage Structures**

Within the Lower Eastern Shore Certified Heritage Area, rehabilitation tax credits are available for the rehabilitation of non-historic structures, whether or not they are within a TIA, provided they meet the tests set forth in Table 6.6.

### **Non-Listed, Non-Designated Certified Heritage Structures**

Non-listed, non-designated structures must be determined eligible for the National Register for Historic Places by the Director of the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) to take advantage of the heritage area tax credit for rehabilitation.

If determined not eligible, the rehabilitation project may still apply for the heritage area rehabilitation tax credit as a non-historic structure, as set forth above, provided it follows the other rules set forth above. If successfully nominated to and *listed in* the National Register prior to rehabilitation, a structure would not be subject to the standards in this section. The rehabilitation project may be determined eligible for Maryland rehabilitation tax credits solely by the MHT; commercial structures if listed in the National Register are furthermore eligible for federal tax credits for rehabilitation, under similar review by the MHT.

### **Process for Extending Tax Benefits to Certified Heritage Structures**

The Maryland Historical Trust is expected to make determinations of Certified Heritage Structure (CHS) status for both non-designated/non-listed and non-historic structures based on the guidelines provided here. In theory, then, this section is self-executing and between the MHT (and MHAA) and the project developer. In practice, it is possible that the MHT will ask for LESHHC review of projects requesting CHS status. It is also possible that developers of rehabilitation projects will seek letters of support from the LESHHC in the process of seeking CHS status. In either case, the LESHHC will undertake the following process:

Using the criteria stated above, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council will be responsible for reviewing proposed rehabilitation projects and plans. The management entity may choose to delegate preliminary review to a committee of individuals with expertise relevant to these criteria. In each case, where a local entity has jurisdiction dealing specifically with design issues, such as the Ocean City Development Corporation (OCDC) or a local architectural review board in a historic district, this local entity will be given the opportunity to review the proposed project according to the criteria stated in this chapter and provide comments for the LESHHC's final determination.

**Tax Credit Certification** – To qualify for the tax credits described above, project sponsors must submit a three-part historic preservation certification application to the Maryland Historical Trust at appropriate points in the rehabilitation process. These three parts are as follows:

#### **Part 1 – Certification of Significance**

To satisfy Part 1 of the tax credit application process, MHAA (acting through the Director of the Maryland Historical Trust) must certify that the proposed project for a non-historic structure will contribute to the significance of the heritage area. This certification will only be granted if the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council informs MHAA in writing that plans for the structure meet the use and design criteria stated above.

### **Parts 2 and 3 – Description and Request for Certification**

Plans for the rehabilitation of non-historic structures will be reviewed by the staff of the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). MHT staff will apply the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation to the extent that they apply to the proposed project. (In the case of non-historic structures, guidance provided here should prevail, and we expect that effective and attractive use of modern materials and design will be permissible.) MHT staff will also determine whether the project reinforces the physical and architectural character of the streetscape in the TIA by maintaining the scale, mass, prevailing setbacks, and character of surrounding structures.

### **TIA Amendment Process**

In addition to the four TIAs proposed for recognition in the first round, there are many other places within the heritage area that will later merit designation as TIAs. In the future, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council expects to amend this plan to designate additional TIAs. The process for such amendment is as follows:

First, the group sponsoring the TIA should determine whether the proposed area is located within the Certified Heritage Area. If outside the CHA boundary, a boundary amendment will be necessary to prepare along with the TIA amendment described here. If the proposed area is inside the boundary, no further action is necessary.

Second, the sponsors should prepare an application requesting TIA designation. The application should explain how the proposed TIA meets the following requirements:

**State Criteria** – These are described in MHAA’s “Guidelines for Establishing Target Investment Zones.”

**Local Criteria** – These are additional criteria adopted by the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, which are listed in previous pages under the heading “Criteria for Target Investment Areas.”

This application should also include a resolution of support from the local governing jurisdiction, specifically endorsing the boundaries and development activities proposed for the TIA.

Third, the TIA application will be reviewed by the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council to make a determination whether the application is acceptable under the criteria.

Fourth, if the application is acceptable, the LESHCH will approve it and forward to MHAA as an amendment to this plan. Following positive action by the MHAA on the amendment request, the benefits of TIAs will be available to structures within the newly recognized TIA. If the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council does not approve the TIA application, or if the entity believes that a resubmission and additional review would result in a better outcome, it will be returned the TIA sponsor with comments to assist the sponsor in revising the application.

Future Target Investment Areas are described briefly below. These descriptions are provided to allow the jurisdictions that have adopted this management plan to consider the amendment process, and do not constitute a promise of approval.

## **Future Target Investment Areas**

**Bending Water Park** – This park is planned as the future home of the Accohannock Tribal Museum that is now located in the Marion Railroad Station. Architectural plans have already been drawn up for a major new museum and cultural facility on a large parcel of land along Tull’s Branch of East Creek, southeast of Marion. Plans also include a restaurant, camping, and outdoor exhibits. In addition, the museum is cultivating a potential relationship with the Smithsonian Institution.

**Berlin** – The Town of Berlin is a beautiful, historic town – so charming that two feature films have been shot there – with a number of important buildings. Many of these have been rehabilitated, many with tax credits, but it may be desirable to create a program based on the “certified heritage structure” tax benefits available to Target Investment Areas.

**Crisfield** – The Town of Crisfield is a key site in the history of the Lower Eastern Shore. It once had good reason to call itself the “Seafood Capital of America,” because it was instrumental to the development of the seafood industry on the Eastern Shore. It also serves as the principal mainland link to Smith Island and Virginia’s Tangier Island. A guided tour bus and shuttle system based in Crisfield could provide a new, land-based attraction for visitors, many of whom only pass through on their way to visit Smith and Tangier Islands. (This transportation project might be linked to the Watermen’s Culture TIA.) Other projects that might be associated with this TIA include the proposed Jenkins Creek Nature Center for a lovely site south of Crisfield, which would provide visitors with a better understanding of Somerset County’s natural environment; and a beautification project along Maryland Route 413 to create a more attractive gateway to Crisfield. This potential TIA might be combined with the potential “Watermen’s Culture” TIA described below.

**Mariners’ Country Down** – This attractive commercial site celebrates the craft traditions of the Lower Eastern Shore, provides workshop space for a number of artisans, and is a destination for heritage tourists. It is in need of additional infrastructure, in a part of Worcester County where water and sewer does not exist. If TIA status can enable this site to open more, upgrade infrastructure, or otherwise improve the (already outstanding) quality of the visitor experience, its owner and the LESHC should work together to support this site in this way.

**Snow Hill** – A number of heritage-related projects already underway or under consideration in Snow Hill make this small town, the county seat of Worcester County, an early candidate for TIA status, once further planning can be completed. (Community Legacy funding for planning studies has been requested.) Projects include:

**Town Riverwalk** – The Sturgis Memorial Gateway (named in the Chesapeake Bay Gateways brochure) starts this boardwalk project at the downstream end, complete with gazebo. The walkway is planned to extend a long way upstream, through the park where “dancing under the stars” takes place every week in the summer, along the rear of the Purnell Museum’s lot, and up to Byrd Park, a lovely large and under-used public park.

**Cannery Property** – This property is located across the river beside the bridge. It may be possible to convert this site to serve as an adjunct site of the Pocomoke Discovery Center. One part of the shuttle system discussed in Chapter 3 is the creation of a boating link between these two sites, which could do double duty as a “floating classroom” on weekdays for local schoolchildren.



Downtown Snow Hill, Worcester County, features several rows of well-maintained brick storefronts from the late nineteenth century. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Walking Tour Improvements** – The current walking tour could be improved to include more history.

**Local Historic District** – The possibility of a local historic district is currently being studied by expert local volunteers.

**Purnell Museum Improvements** – Several improvements could be made to the Julia Purnell Museum, now located in a tiny former Catholic Chapel owned by the town. Despite its lack of floor space, the museum hosts many visits by school groups and even small events. Rethinking the museum’s place in the town and role in the community is a part of the planning strategy proposed for Community Legacy funding.

Other possible projects include reestablishing a tourism-based rail connection between Berlin and Snow Hill on the still-active line; development of a “rail trail” project should also be examined as a possibility, like that found in York County, Pennsylvania, a highly popular recreational destination. A former chicken processing site owned by an absentee owner on the river upstream of Byrd Park also needs examination for ways to improve it, or at least make it less unsightly. Because it is next to the sewage treatment plant, it may not be possible to encourage commercial or residential development there, but it might serve for active recreation.

**Waterman’s Culture** – The culture of the watermen in the Lower Eastern Shore is a story that should be shared with the outside world, and the marshes and water views in the area south of the mouth of the Nanticoke River down to Smith Island are supremely beautiful. A “discontiguous” TIA might be formed through a consortium of the Chesapeake Bay maritime communities of the Lower Eastern Shore Recognized Heritage Area. An integrated interpretive and tourism development program devoted to these locations could give visitors a variety of opportunities to learn more about this important culture along the Chesapeake Bay. Planning for this program should investigate the development of a ferry system to give visitors a wider choice of transportation options between bay and inland towns. In this way, the geography of water and land could be turned into an asset for tourism, rather than a hindrance. Potential communities for this TIA are:

**Smith Island** – Smith Island is the only inhabited island in Maryland’s Chesapeake Bay region that is not connected to the mainland by a bridge. Smith Island is a waterbound community especially reliant on crabbing and other forms of fishing. It already receives much tourism visitation. Although this tourism industry provides only a small proportion of the employment on the island (as compared with the 150 watermen who work there), it diversifies the economy and provides extra income to families committed to living there. With the recent completion of a multi-million dollar bulkhead to protect the

island's eroding shores, it may now be time for the community to begin to consider a coordinated tourism development strategy.

**Deal Island and Wenona** – These island communities have the largest fleet of skipjacks on the Chesapeake Bay. A skipjack heritage museum is proposed in the community of Wenona. As a first step toward building the visitation to support such a project, it is possible to renovate a number of skipjacks to Coast Guard standards, so that they could be used for tourist trips as well as for oystering. The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, which is responsible for assisting skipjack captains in maintaining this unique Maryland fleet, strongly supports this idea. Deal Island is associated with a state Wildlife Management Area that could become a component to an interpretive strategy for the natural heritage of the Lower Eastern Shore.

**Village of Nanticoke** – This village has been proposed as the site for a museum built around a collection of community artifacts.

**Rumbley and Frenchtown** – Rumbley is an attractively sited maritime villages on the far western edge of the heritage area. The neighboring inland community of Frenchtown is situated around a beautiful church.

## **Return on State Investment**

Throughout this chapter, we have suggested many ways that the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area will benefit from recognition and certification. As one summary point, this section provides the required “return on state investment” that this plan must predict.

Although the State of Maryland will incur costs as a result of its investment in heritage tourism here, it will see additional rewards in the future. The cost of capital improvements to visitor attractions, increased marketing, and programmatic linkages among attractions can generate a measurable increase in annual state tax receipts. Current state tax receipts derived from tourism are reported in Chapter 5, Table 5.1. State investment can also help to leverage private investment. Annual tax revenues to the state could potentially cover the state's contribution toward annual programming costs and still provide an annual rate of return on investment (capital and one-time programming costs) ranging between 1.6 and 2.8 percent.

**Table 6.5 Heritage Area Benefits: Comparing RHA, CHA, and TIZ Status**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Operating Assistance</b>	<b>Grants</b>	<b>Loans</b>
<b>Recognized Heritage Area (RHA)</b>	n/a	Eligible for grant of up to 50% of the cost of preparing a Heritage Area Mgmt Plan.	n/a
<b>Certified Heritage Area (CHA)</b>	Eligible for grants of up to 50% to heritage area management entities for operating activities for at least five years following heritage area certification. Max grant award is \$200,000. Source: MHAA Financing Fund.	1) Eligible for grants of up to 50% to local jurisdictions or other appropriate entities for planning, design, interpretation, marketing, and programming. Max grant award is \$50,000. Source: MHAA Financing Fund.  2) See Operating Assistance column.	n/a
<b>Target Investment Zone (TIZ) within CHA*</b>		Eligible for grants of up to 50% to local jurisdictions or other appropriate entities for property acquisition, development, preservation, and restoration. Max grant award is \$100,000. Source: MHAA Financing Fund.	1) Eligible for loans to local jurisdictions or other appropriate entities for the preservation of heritage resources and the enhancement of heritage attractions and visitor services Loans made from MHAA Financing Fund.  2) Eligible for loans to local jurisdictions or 501(c)(3)s for economic development projects. Loans made from the proceeds of revenue bonds sold by MHAA. Projects must produce a revenue stream sufficient to pay the debt service on the bonds.

\*Note that grants and loans are only available to TIZs for period of 5 years following certification.



**Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area**  
*Chapter 6 – Economic Development and Targeted Investment*

(Table 6.5 Continued)

Source: MHAA Staff Draft 11-13-01

Tax Credits	Broad Program Support	Program Impact
n/a	n/a	n/a
<p>1) State income tax credits for the rehabilitation of non-historic structures, the rehabilitation of which will significantly enhance the overall architectural, historical, or cultural quality of the heritage area and the visitor experience.</p> <p>2) Local property tax credits in the form of an offset of property taxes owed in an amount equal to the increase in property taxes resulting from the rehabilitation improvements for a period of up to 10 years (local government must enact).</p>	<p>DHCD, DBED, DNR, MHEC, MDOT, and DGS must carry out agency actions that support the Heritage Area in planning, development, use, regulation, and other assistance.</p>	<p>In carrying out activities in CHAs, State Agencies must cooperate and coordinate with the Heritage Area Management Entity and ensure that those activities are consistent with the management plan and will not have an adverse effect on the historical and cultural resources of the area unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative.</p>
<p>1) and 2) as per above</p> <p>3) State income tax credits for the rehabilitation of non-listed, non-designated historic structures.</p>	<p>DHCD, DBED, DNR, MHEC, MDOT, and DGS must carry out agency actions that support the Heritage Area in planning, development, use, regulation, and other assistance.</p>	<p>In carrying out activities in CHAs, State Agencies must cooperate and coordinate with the Heritage Area Management Entity and ensure that those activities are consistent with the management plan and will not have an adverse effect on the historical and cultural resources of the area unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative.</p>

## Chapter 7 **Stewardship**

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Pocomoke River near Snow Hill, Worcester County

# Chapter 7

## Stewardship

### Introduction

Stewardship involves the management and care of resources of all types and taking measures to protect them for the benefit of future generations. This management plan for the Lower Eastern Heritage Area must address the heritage area's approach and policies toward the area's natural, cultural, and historic resources as well as the evolving character and quality of its landscape and communities as a whole. Through its stewardship policies, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area must demonstrate that it meets Maryland Heritage Area Authority (MHAA) requirements for preservation and conservation.

The landscape of the Lower Eastern Shore plays a central role in the presentation of the region to visitors. The heritage area's scenic roads, historic communities, agricultural landscape, and rich variety of natural resources create the setting that visitors come to experience. The quality of the Lower Eastern Shore landscape is also central to local residents' quality of life. Stewardship of the resources that give the Lower Eastern Shore its character is in the long-term interest of everyone in the region.

Stewardship is a responsibility shared by governments, non-profits, private property owners, and residents. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council (LEHSC) can support preservation and conservation in the region by structuring its partnerships, programs, and projects to actively support and promote existing and potential stewardship initiatives. By educating the public about the value of the region's heritage resources, the heritage area can encourage public support for active stewardship. The LEHSC can play this role by:

- Supporting partners and projects that will to conserve the resources that contribute to the quality of the landscape and the visitor experience;
- Being an advocate for organizations and agencies that are seeking to preserve resources, to improve their leadership, and to locate funding;
- Providing technical assistance to individuals and groups who request it;
- Monitoring, publicizing, and rewarding stewardship; and

- Organizing a Stewardship Committee to supervise the LESHHC contributions to the region's activities.

The Stewardship Committee will create a regular feature on stewardship issues and activities for the LESHHC newsletter. The Stewardship Committee will also contribute to the LESHHC annual report with a section focusing on stewardship, outlining issues, highlighting priorities, recognizing achievements, and providing a scorecard on progress. The LESHHC will also establish an awards program for stewardship initiatives and accomplishments to honor organizations, individuals, and programs across the region on a yearly basis.

Many programs are in place to assist the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area in protecting natural, historic, cultural, and landscape resources. Different levels of government and types of organizations are involved. The tools available to these groups include recognition programs (such as state scenic byways), tax incentives for private property owners, the purchase of conservation easements and land, and public regulation of development. The remainder of this chapter summarizes the status of existing stewardship efforts on the Lower Eastern Shore and details the role that the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area will play in these efforts.

## **Natural Resources and Open Space**

Natural resources are among the most compelling features in the Lower Eastern Shore. Many of the unique and significant natural resources of the region are related to water and wetlands. The ecosystems of the Chesapeake Bay, the Atlantic shore and coastal bays, and the numerous waterways in the region have been widely recognized for their richness and fragility.

Significant initiatives have been launched by governmental entities, non-profit organizations, and collaborative partnerships to protect the fragile ecosystems and natural resources of the Lower Eastern Shore. The Chesapeake Bay Program and the Maryland Coastal Bays program have coordinated many of these initiatives. Many of the wetlands of the region are in federal, state, county, or non-profit ownership or otherwise protected as critical areas. Beach replenishment has also been a major focus. As a whole, the open space and resource protection programs in place on the Lower Eastern Shore are comprehensive and impressive. These programs must continue to be developed, expanded, and linked together for mutual support.

### **Federal Lands**

Federal ownership is an important means of protecting critical lands. Advantages of federal ownership include access to technical expertise for land management

as well as potential access to federal funding and program support for research, education, interpretation, and infrastructure improvements for appropriate public uses. The federal government is an important partner in heritage area development and implementation. The more ways that can be found for the federal government to be involved in the region, the more leveraging of federal support can be developed.

On the Lower Eastern Shore, the federal government owns two significant areas of land. While the federal government is not the largest owner of public land on the Lower Eastern Shore, its lands are among the best known and most critical.

**Assateague Island National Seashore** – The Assateague Island National Seashore occupies the barrier island on the Lower Eastern Shore’s Atlantic coast and the waters surrounding the island. The Maryland portion of the island is managed by the National Park Service and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Assateague State Park is located within the National Seashore and is a primary point of public access to the island. A National Park Service visitor center is located on the Route 611 approach to the island. Assateague Island is a nationally known and treasured resource and is a significant and high-quality attraction for residents and visitors. The Virginia portion of the island, which lies to the south, includes the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.



Water views are among the most picturesque scenes in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. On Assateague Island in Worcester County, land and water connect in a variety of ways. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Martin National Wildlife Refuge** – National Wildlife Refuges are federally owned lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These lands typically have sensitive plant and animal communities or endangered species habitats and have been acquired by the federal government for their protection. On the Lower Eastern Shore, Martin National Wildlife Refuge on Smith Island is a significant resource that protects a large portion of the island.

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should maintain close contacts and partnerships with the agencies and individuals that manage federal lands within the heritage area. Issues that are of concern on these lands should be addressed to the extent appropriate by the heritage area and its partners. Continued preservation of these critical lands, their plant communities, and their wildlife should be an ongoing interest of the heritage area.

The heritage area should encourage the development and implementation of programs for visitors and residents related to these federal lands. Educational programming, interpretation, and recreational opportunities are not only attractions for visitors, but are the means through which public support for the preservation of these and other natural resources can be encouraged. Wherever possible, heritage area programming should be undertaken with the assistance of other groups that play a role in managing the natural, historic, and cultural resources of the Lower Eastern Shore. On Assateague Island, for instance, the heritage area should work closely with the National Park Service to support mutually beneficial educational and interpretive programming.

### **Federal Resource Protection Programs**

The federal government sponsors three broad-based programs that are intended to protect the natural and cultural environment within the Chesapeake Bay region: the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (CBNERR), the Chesapeake Bay Program, and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program. (The Coastal Bays Program is described in the following section on state programs, as it affects only Maryland.) The LESHHC will support and participate in these programs as appropriate.

**Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve** – The CBNERR is one of 25 reserves along the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Great Lakes, and Gulf of Mexico. These reserves are managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The purpose of these reserves is to help communities to address coastal zone issues through scientific study and education. Within the reserves, scientists focus on issues such as nonpoint source pollution, habitat restoration and invasive species.

The CBNERR is a 4,820-acre area that includes lands in Maryland and Virginia. The Maryland portion of the reserve includes 3,426 acres in Somerset County, known as the Monie Bay component. Monie Bay is a salt marsh habitat that has been affected by excess nutrient runoff and sedimentation. Monitoring programs in the marsh have increased scientists' ability to understand changes that are taking place throughout the Chesapeake Bay.

**Chesapeake Bay Program** – Another federal program, the Chesapeake Bay Program, is a national model for environmental management and collaborative

programming. Led by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Chesapeake Bay Program is cooperative program that involves federal agencies, state governments, and an array of regional organizations. The goal of the program is to manage and protect environmental resources in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Many programs sponsored by the State of Maryland, from the Critical Areas program to Wildlife Management Areas, have developed out of this collaboration.

In June 2000, through the initiative of the National Park Service and the collaborative efforts of partnering agencies and organizations, the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network was established as a new component of the Chesapeake Bay Program. Authorized by Congress in the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998, the Gateways Network is a “broad-based partnership to enhance people’s connections” with the bay’s resources “in meaningful ways that foster conservation and restoration of the bay.” The partnership is creating a network of gateways, sites, and resources that link the special places within the bay watershed. Physical and programmatic links among the gateways will encourage people to explore, understand, and help conserve the bay and its resources.

The Gateways Network is an important program for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. The goals of the program are similar to the goals of the heritage area. Addressed in more detail in Chapter 4, Interpretation, this heritage area plan has been planned to fit into and support the Gateways Network. Its role in fostering education and understanding across the Chesapeake Bay is identical to the role that the heritage area should play on the Lower Eastern Shore.

### **State Lands and Resource Protection Programs**

The State of Maryland is the largest owner of publicly held lands on the Lower Eastern Shore. These lands include Wildlife (and Natural Resource) Management Areas, state forests, and state parks, all of which are under the ownership and management of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The acquisition and management of critical lands is an important component of the state’s effort to preserve natural resources and open space. The state is responsible for a number of other important resource protection initiatives, regulations, and programs as well.

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should maintain a close cooperative relationship with DNR and other state agencies responsible for land management. The heritage area should support research and conservation programs on these lands, and should support the acquisition of additional lands where appropriate. The development of appropriate management strategies and techniques can have important ramifications for the management of other lands within the region as well. Appropriate recreational, interpretive, and educational uses on state lands should be encouraged, supported, and marketed by the heritage area and its

partners as experiences characteristic of the Lower Eastern Shore. However, these uses must not be of such intensity as to result in environmental degradation.

State lands and programs related to resource protection include:

**State Parks** – Parks play a small role in preserving land on the Lower Eastern Shore, but provide such recreational opportunities as camping, fishing, and boating. There are three state parks in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area:

**Assateague State Park** – Assateague Island is an important recreational destination for visitors and residents. The park contains 756 acres and along with camping sites, features three short nature trails that allow visitors to experience marsh, forest, and dune habitats.

**Janes Island State Park** – This park, located on the Chesapeake Bay in Somerset County, protects an important wetland habitat near Crisfield. There are 3,147 acres in this park.

**Pocomoke River State Park** – This recreation-oriented park is located adjacent to Pocomoke State Forest. Shad Landing and Milburn Landing are located within the state park and forest. (Shad fishing was once an important industry along the river, hence the name.) Visitors to the park can be found camping, biking, canoeing, fishing and hiking. A nature trail called the “Trail of Change” focuses on historic and natural features.

**State Forests and Forest Lands** – Forests, which were once ubiquitous across the three counties, still cover a significant percentage of the Lower Eastern Shore. They are an important part of the ecology of the region, and state forests on the Lower Eastern Shore play an important role in protecting and preserving significant tracts of forested land. These forests are characterized by the loblolly pine, oak-pine, and oak-hickory plant communities that help give the Lower Eastern Shore its distinctive character.

**Chesapeake Forest Lands** – These lands are located throughout the Eastern Shore of Maryland (from Kent County, Maryland, south to Worcester County), and in southern Delaware. They represent most of the former landholdings of the Chesapeake Forest Products Company, and were transferred to public ownership in 1999 and 2000. Within the Lower Eastern Shore, there are 45,974 acres of these lands.

**Pocomoke State Forest** – The primary state forest on the Lower Eastern Shore is the Pocomoke State Forest in Worcester County, with a portion in Somerset County. The forest contains 14,753 acres in a series of large tracts associated with the Pocomoke River and its tributaries. This large



forest is a major resource and potential attraction within the region and one of the largest areas of preserved land in Worcester County.

**Wicomico Demonstration Forest** – Located eight miles east of Salisbury, this forest encompasses 1,200 acres. More than 53 species of birds have been spotted here, and an arboretum on the property contains more than 50 trees and shrubs. The Maryland DNR manages the forest as a demonstration area for forestry, wildlife, and recreation. Natural resources education is an important part of its mission.



Water views are among the most picturesque scenes in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. On Assateague Island in Worcester County, land and water connect in a variety of ways. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Forest Conservation Ordinances** – In 1991, the State of Maryland required each county in the state to adopt a Forest Conservation Ordinance. These state-mandated ordinances protect lands from development within fifty feet of stream banks. All three counties on the Lower Eastern Shore have adopted these ordinances, which help protect the critical water resources within the region and also enhance its scenic qualities.

**Natural Resource Management Areas** – NRMAs are state-owned lands established for the management and protection of lands that have been identified as having special qualities. These areas are particularly important as areas where land management techniques are developed and refined. Currently, however, there are no Natural Resource Management Areas on the Lower Eastern Shore.

**Wildlife Management Areas** – Wildlife Management Areas are an important component of the open space and resource protection system on the Lower Eastern Shore. Thirteen state Wildlife Management Areas are located within the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area: seven in Somerset County, three in Wicomico County, and three in Worcester County. The combined acreage of these thirteen areas is more than 32,000 acres.

**Table 7.1 Wildlife Management Areas in the Lower Eastern Shore**

<b>Wildlife Management Area</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Cedar Island	Somerset	3,000
Deal Island	Somerset	13,000
E.A. Vaughn	Worcester	1,751
Ellis Bay	Wicomico	3,000
Fairmount	Somerset	4,000
Isle of Wight	Worcester	200
Johnson	Wicomico	115
Maryland Marine Properties	Somerset	1,000
Nanticoke	Wicomico	1,700
Pocomoke Sound	Somerset	900
Sinepuxent Bay	Worcester	25
South Marsh Island	Somerset	3,000
Wellington	Somerset	400
<b>Lower Eastern Shore</b>		<b>32,091</b>

Source: Maryland DNR website: [www.dnr.state.md.us](http://www.dnr.state.md.us)

Most of these Wildlife Management Areas are associated with the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic coast. In Somerset County alone, the Department of Natural Resources manages 24,400 acres, most of which are within Wildlife Management Areas.

**Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program** – The Lower Eastern Shore plays an important role in the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Program. Established by the State of Maryland in 1984 as part of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative, the Critical Area Program aims to minimize development within 1,000 feet of tidal shorelines or tidal wetlands along the bay from development. On the Lower Eastern Shore, because of the large extent of tidal shorelines and wetlands, the Critical Area Program is important in protecting fragile water-related resources.

**Somerset County** – The Critical Area Program in Somerset County encompasses 76,000 acres, or 35 percent of the county’s total area.

**Wicomico County** – In Wicomico County, the Critical Area Program encompasses 75,000 acres. These lands are divided into three categories: 1) intensely developed, 2) limited development, and 3) resource conservation. Each of these categories also includes a buffer. Special regulatory provisions are provided for protection of land and water resources within these areas

are summarized in the county comprehensive plans. Wicomico County has recently amended its Critical Area Program ordinance to authorize the use of transfer of development rights (TDR) to help preserve critical, undeveloped portions of this area.

**Maryland Coastal Bays Program** – The Maryland Coastal Bays Program is a cooperative effort among Worcester County, the Town of Berlin, Town of Ocean City, the State of Maryland, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Its goal is to protect the coastal bays of Assateague Island, Fenwick Island (where Ocean City is located), and the mainland. The Coastal Bays Program is part of National Estuary Program that was authorized by Congress in Clean Water Act of 1987. The goal of the program is to protect the bays and their ecosystems by developing and implementing a comprehensive, long-term conservation and management plan.

The Coastal Bays Program is a significant initiative for the conservation of natural resources in the region. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should work with the program to actively support its goals and monitor its results. Again, public interpretation and education is a way that the heritage area can contribute to the goals of the partnership.

**Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation** – Founded in 1977, this state-wide foundation encourages voluntary preservation of agricultural lands through the purchase of easements. The details of this program are discussed in the “Agriculture” section of this chapter.

**Rural Legacy Program** – The State of Maryland created the Rural Legacy Program to protect large, contiguous areas where significant agricultural lands, forests, and natural and cultural resources are already being protected. These areas are only designated where a local or regional partnership exists to support and supplement state efforts. The Maryland General Assembly has allocated funding for the purchase of lands and conservation easements within designated Rural Legacy Areas. There are two Rural Legacy Areas on the Lower Eastern Shore.

**Wicomico County** – In Wicomico County, the Quantico Creek Rural Legacy Area includes 13,637 acres of forested and farmed lands along Quantico Creek, a Nanticoke River tributary. The Quantico Creek area is rich in prehistoric, historic, scenic, agricultural, and natural resources. Wicomico County is currently working in partnership with the Lower Shore Land Trust, the Conservation Fund, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the Maryland Environmental Trust to use \$750,000 in Rural Legacy Program funds toward the purchase of conservation easements in this area.

**Worcester County** – The Coastal Bays Rural Legacy Area is a 15,000-acre area in the southern part of the coastal watershed. The county worked with the Lower Shore Land Trust, the Conservation Fund, and the Maryland Coastal Bays Program to create this area. On this land, 2,639 acres were protected through easement in 2000, and 1,748 additional acres were protected in 2001. The state has provided Worcester County with approximately \$6.75 million in grants.

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should become a strong partner in implementing Rural Legacy Program initiatives throughout the region. The heritage area should coordinate with regional partners to establish a region-wide approach to the program.



Downtown Princess Anne in Somerset County recently underwent streetscape improvements that included the burying of utility wires. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Community Legacy Program** – Maryland’s newly created Community Legacy program focuses on community reinvestment, urban revitalization, housing, and homeownership. In December 2001, Governor Parris Glendening announced the awarding of \$10 million in Community Legacy funds to several communities throughout Maryland. The following communities in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area will receive funds from this program:

**Somerset County** – Crisfield; Princess Anne

**Wicomico County** – Delmar; Salisbury

**Worcester County** – Downtown Ocean City; Downtown Pocomoke City; Snow Hill

## Greenways

In planning for open space, recreation, and landscape resources in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, the counties will continue to take the lead, working closely with state agencies and other groups. All three counties in the heritage area have updated their Land Preservation and Recreation Plans (LPRPs) in the past four years. These plans, which have existed in Maryland since the 1970s, summarize the land protection programs and initiatives in each county. Many of these programs are discussed in this chapter, and are also mentioned in Chapter 3 (Orientation and Linkages). The three plans should be viewed as a single, combined, and complementary regional effort. Coordination among the plans should be emphasized. Programs that are proving effective in one county should be considered for implementation by the other counties. The plans should continue to be enhanced with new county-led implementation initiatives.

Because of the importance of water-related resources to the landscape character and environmental quality of the Lower Eastern Shore, greenways along rivers and waterways are a particularly important and appropriate means of preserving open space and natural resources within the region. Greenways not only protect water-related resources, but create linkages among communities and existing tracts of preserved open space. The establishment of greenways along waterways should continue to be a major goal of land stewardship initiatives on the Lower Eastern Shore. The three counties should continue to aggressively pursue the creation of greenways within the context of a region-wide greenways network. Greenway initiatives often involve state, county, and local governments as well as non-profit organizations. Greenway initiatives that involve the Lower Eastern Shore include:

**Maryland Greenways Commission** – This commission is a state appointed body made up of individuals from the public and private sectors who are committed to open space protection. Established in 1990, the commission promotes and supports the creation of greenways throughout the state. A particular interest is the extension and interconnection of local greenways into a broad, comprehensive statewide open space system. Because of the importance of rivers and water resources as greenways within the Lower Eastern Shore, collaboration with the Maryland Greenways Commission in the creation of local greenways will contribute to the protection of natural resources.

**Regional Greenways** – The Pocomoke River Regional Greenway is unique within the region because it will extend through all three counties and feature the region's inland blackwater river habitats and resources. This greenway links the Pocomoke River State Forest to the Nassawango Creek Preserve Greenway along one of the river's key tributaries. The Pocomoke River Greenway is in the process of being extended by Worcester and Somerset

Counties. Support for this effort should be a major, long-term focus of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. The heritage area's designation of a Target Investment Area in Pocomoke City with a Regional Interpretive Center at the Pocomoke River Discovery Center builds on the vision for this regional greenway.

**Somerset County Greenways** – Greenway initiatives in Somerset County include the Tangier Sound Greenway (an ecological island greenway), the Westover-to-Crisfield Rail Trail, and the Pocomoke Sound Greenway. Somerset County is also working closely with Worcester County to develop the Pocomoke River Greenway, a regional initiative that is described above.

**Wicomico County Greenways** – Through its Greenways Commission, Wicomico County has developed a comprehensive greenways plan. Three greenways have been created, and others are proposed. One of the most extensive greenways is the Salisbury Urban Greenway, which is located in the heart of the “Salisbury Crescent” that links many interpretive sites in the Salisbury area. Among these sites are the Ward Museum, Pemberton Historical Park, and the Chipman Center, which are components of the proposed Salisbury Crescent Target Investment Area (TIA). The Ward Museum will also serve as one of three Regional Interpretive Centers in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area.

**Worcester County Greenways** – Greenway initiatives in Worcester County include the Nassawango Creek Preserve, Assateague Island Greenway, and the Snow Hill Rail-Trail. Assateague's large size, unique habitats, and public accessibility make it an important resource and attraction. As mentioned above, Wicomico County is also a partner with Somerset County in creating the Pocomoke River Regional Greenway.

The increased public interest and support for open space and greenways in recent years promises continued support for enhancing and implementing county land preservation plans. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should be actively involved in advocating and supporting county open space planning by developing programming and by coordinating funding for projects that facilitate and complement the county-led efforts. The designation of the Salisbury Crescent and Pocomoke City as Target Investment Areas with Regional Interpretive Centers as outlined in Chapters 4 and 6 helps create such support. The heritage area's creation and marketing of new bicycle trails, water trails, and interpretation will feature existing and potential greenways and open space, broadening public exposure and building public support.

## **Private Conservation Lands**

The term “private conservation” refers to the protection of lands through ownership by non-profit organizations and through conservation easements. The importance of private conservation initiatives has increased in recent years because they are voluntary, non-regulatory, and do not necessarily require governmental funding commitments. Non-profit land trusts are the lead entities in preserving private conservation lands. The effort requires a sustained program of identifying critical lands, developing partnerships and funding sources, educating owners about the environmental and financial benefits of conservation, implementation, and ongoing monitoring and management.

Environmental organizations and land trusts have protected a large number of acres on the Lower Eastern Shore:

**Lower Shore Land Trust** – LSLT holds easements on 2,300 acres throughout the region, including 701 acres in Somerset County, 660 acres in Wicomico County, and 939 acres in Worcester County. The Lower Shore Land Trust is a local leader in land conservation initiatives. The Trust was a significant partner in the establishment of a state-designated Rural Legacy Area in southern Worcester County.

**Maryland Environmental Trust** – MET is a quasi-public agency established and largely funded by the state, and is one of the oldest American organizations of this type. It holds easements throughout the Lower Eastern Shore, including 2,141 acres in Somerset County on one tract near Manokin and another at the Irish Grove Wildlife Sanctuary; 551 acres in Wicomico County near Hebron, Whitehaven, and Greenhill; and three easements on 59 acres in Worcester County.

**Maryland Ornithological Society** – The Society holds easements on 1,409 acres in Somerset County.

**The Nature Conservancy** – TNC is a national non-profit organization that purchases and protects land to protect the habitats of threatened and endangered species. The Conservancy currently owns 4,000 acres along Nassawango Creek in Wicomico and Worcester Counties, and 500 acres along the Nanticoke River in Wicomico County.

Advocacy organizations also play a role in preserving resources on the Lower Eastern Shore. The Assateague Coastal Trust is an advocacy and education organization that deals with environmental issues in coastal bays. In Worcester County, the Worcester Environmental Trust functions as a watchdog organization that follows planning and zoning issues and advocates for the conservation of important natural, scenic, and cultural resources.

The LESHHC will support, assist, and facilitate the work of local and regional land trusts. The heritage area will forge close working relationships and collaborative projects with these organizations and encourage them to develop a region-wide action strategy. The organizational and financial strength of these organizations is in the interest of the heritage area and the region, and so the heritage area will assist them when possible in developing their strength over time. Through public education, the heritage area can continue to build support for land preservation through conservation easements and private acquisition.

## **Agricultural Land**

Historically, agriculture has been central to the way of life on the Lower Eastern Shore. Flat topography, abundant water, and a mild climate have contributed to the establishment of a strong agricultural economy within the region. The agricultural industry on the Lower Eastern Shore today focuses on poultry, most of which is processed locally before it is shipped to market. Up to 95 percent of the agricultural land on the Lower Eastern Shore is cropland, primarily growing corn and soybeans for use as poultry feed.

Agricultural land is a significant element of the heritage area landscape and is fundamental to character of the Lower Eastern Shore. Approximately 30 percent of the region's land is agricultural, totaling approximately 250,000 acres. This land is critical to the heritage area not only because it provides open space and scenic qualities, but because it is a living, vital, and historic part of the region's way of life.

The economic hardships and low financial returns associated with farming and the loss of farmland due to development are recognized as serious issues within the three counties. Preservation of agricultural lands is addressed primarily by three mechanisms, two of which are state initiatives:

**Agricultural Zoning** – Agricultural zoning is regulated by the three counties, and is often an effective tool when it has the support of farmers and landowners. Each county currently has its own zoning provisions for agricultural lands. The effectiveness of these provisions must be constantly monitored and the provisions should be periodically updated in accordance with techniques that have proven effective.

**Transfer of Development Rights** – Transfer of development rights (TDR) is another technique that can be used to preserve agricultural land. The clustering and increased density that result from TDRs, however, also require adequate sewerage or other environmentally sound types of wastewater disposal.



**Agricultural Easements** – Another important agricultural preservation program in the state is the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), which was established in 1977. In this program, the foundation buys easements from property owners who agree to relinquish some of their development rights. The value of these easements is often determined by the difference between the land’s value as an agricultural property and its fair market value.



This section of Maryland Route 346 near Parsonsburg, Wicomico County, highlights the region’s agricultural land. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

In order to qualify for the program, owners must enroll their farms in agricultural land preservation districts. In the three counties, 89 agricultural preservation districts have been created totaling 12,386 acres, just under five percent of their agricultural land. In Worcester and Somerset Counties, easements have been sold on 21 farms totaling approximately 3,500 acres, or just over two percent of the agricultural lands within the two counties.

In 2001, Wicomico County’s Agricultural Land Preservation Program was certified by the Maryland Department of Planning and the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. To date, over 27,000 acres in Wicomico County have been preserved through the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, the Maryland Environmental Trust, and the Chesapeake Forest Lands Project. Over the next fifteen years, the county plans to significantly expand this program.

**Rural Legacy Program** – Maryland’s Rural Legacy Program has the potential to preserve agricultural lands through purchase of lands and purchase of agricultural easements. The Rural Legacy Program is outlined above in the discussion of State of Maryland resource protection programs.

Agricultural preservation policies are established through the Land Preservation and Recreation Plans adopted by each of the three counties. These policies include:

- **Conservation Easements** – The purchase of these easements should be continued;
- **Agricultural Zoning** – The use of agricultural zoning should be encouraged;
- **Growth Areas** – Infrastructure improvements such as sewer service should only be made within designated growth areas;
- **Rural Legacy Program** – The counties should continue to participate in the state’s Rural Legacy Program; and
- **Farming** – Support should be extended to farm service groups and for agricultural education programs.

The LESHHC should support the preservation of farming and farmland within the three counties. Coordination of existing programs among the three counties is a desirable objective. The heritage area should join with other organizations in advocating programs that support the viability of farming and make the sale of easements an attractive option for farmers.

The preservation of agricultural land is a complex task that requires input from public agencies, private businesses, and non-profit groups. While the LESHHC cannot undertake this work on its own, it can serve as a catalyst for public and private action. In the short term, the heritage area’s new management entity, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council, could simply look for ways of enriching public knowledge of the region’s agricultural heritage, and helping to find ways to bring local agricultural products into local farmers’ markets, grocery stores, and restaurants. The LESHHC’s agricultural brochure has already contributed to visitors’ awareness of what the Lower Eastern Shore has to offer. The LESHHC should continue to update that brochure on a regular basis.

The future of agriculture in the Lower Eastern Shore should be studied in more depth. To preserve agricultural land, it is important to observe what areas are being farmed in each of the counties, and to understand how those areas relate to current agricultural zoning and growth areas and to trends in the business of farming. County agricultural development and preservation plans may form the basis for the necessary long and sustained collaborative effort. Strong and appropriate growth management techniques must also be a part of any agricultural preservation program.

Agricultural land preservation is just one of many tools that support the economic health of agriculture over the long term. Right-to-farm laws help to ensure that farmers are able to continue their work despite changes in land use and development around their properties. Agricultural education in schools is another technique that can help agriculture. If children and young adults learn more

about the mechanics of farming and its role in the community, more of them can be recruited to join the ranks of farmers.

## Growth Management

All three counties of the Lower Eastern Shore face significant challenges from growth and development. Over the past fifty years, development around the region's cities, towns, and principal roadways has undermined the economic viability of the downtown cores, reduced the amount of farmland, and compromised the visual character of the region. Strong county initiatives are required to address the growth management issues of the region.

Salisbury and Ocean City have experienced the most significant growth in recent years. Princess Anne, Pocomoke City, Crisfield, and other towns have grown as well. Although this growth is a sign of economic vitality, it has frequently occurred at the expense of the visual character of the communities that the heritage area has been created to help preserve and promote. Perhaps most troublesome is the fact that the primary roads that visitors use to enter and travel through the region are the very locations where the distinctive character of the Lower Eastern Shore has been most compromised.

The status of comprehensive planning and other growth management tools varies across the Lower Eastern Shore:

**Somerset County** – Somerset County adopted its comprehensive plan in 1996.

**Wicomico County** – Wicomico County's comprehensive plan, which was adopted in 1998, calls for the creation of design guidelines for new development. The county zoning ordinance is currently in the process of being substantially revised. This ordinance will include provisions that require the creation of open space in new residential developments that are built on agriculturally zoned land. The proposed design standards will require open space to surround the entire site of a residential cluster development. They will outline procedures to protect viewsheds, establish street landscaping requirements, and create design standards for community open space. To preserve and enhance the character of existing villages, standards will be created for development that occurs in and around them.

**Worcester County** – Worcester County last adopted a comprehensive plan in 1989, but is in the process of reviewing it for a possible update. In 2000, Worcester County produced the U.S. Route 50 Corridor Plan to guide future development along the thirteen-mile stretch of Route 50 between Herring Creek and Maryland Route 346 west of Berlin. Two Quality Community

Surveys have been undertaken in Worcester County. The Maryland Coastal Bays Program conducted a survey in 1998, and the county conducted a survey in 2000. These surveys addressed local concerns about the visual quality of development in these communities. Worcester County has already made progress in maintaining visual quality, however, as evidenced by its admirable job of reducing or eliminating billboards on the way into Ocean City.

The role of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area in growth management is to promote and support county efforts to identify and implement strategies that preserve landscape and community character. Through its partnerships, the heritage area can serve as a catalyst between interest groups and across governmental boundaries. Growth boundaries, community revitalization programs, design guidelines for new commercial development, landscape design standards for new commercial development, signage design guidelines, and subdivision options that preserve significant amounts of open space are techniques that can be used to strengthen community character.

## **Historic and Cultural Resources**

Historic and cultural resources are key components of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. These resources include not only buildings and structures, but the region's broader cultural landscape, its communities, and its cultural traditions. The importance of the landscape on the Lower Eastern Shore is particularly striking. The interaction of people with land, water, and environment is evident throughout the region. The human response to the ocean, bay, and land in between has built industries, shaped communities, and created a way of life.

Historic buildings and structures on the Lower Eastern Shore should not be considered isolated resources, but elements of a cultural landscape. Visitors to the heritage area should be told about the landscape first, its character and patterns of settlement and development, and then about the individual resources and how they fit into a larger context. The interpretive themes outlined in Chapter 4 (Interpretation) help to establish this context.

From a stewardship perspective, a cultural landscape approach to historic preservation emphasizes that individual resources should be viewed as a part of their historic context. Preserving the landscape of the Lower Eastern Shore helps to preserve the region's historic resources. Preserving communities and strengthening community character helps preserve the historic buildings and landscape elements that contribute to that character. The heritage area's role in historic preservation begins with education. Then, by empowering communities and individuals to use tools and incentives that favor preservation, the heritage area can help strengthen the character and improve the quality of life on the Lower Eastern Shore.

**Research Program** – Several scholars on the Lower Eastern Shore are familiar with the broad scope of the region’s history. Detailed architectural information has been published about buildings in Somerset and Worcester Counties. The Somerset County Historical Trust and Maryland Historical Trust published a history of Somerset County in 1990. A comprehensive historic sites survey of Worcester County was published in a 1994 book entitled *Along the Seaboard Side: An Architectural History of Worcester County*. A similar history of Wicomico County is currently underway. To further develop the region’s potential for interpretation and education, the heritage area should coordinate the efforts of local scholars and universities to undertake a comprehensive research program on the history of the Lower Eastern Shore. Salisbury University, the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, and Wor-Wic Community College should be involved in this effort.

A bibliography, database, and research protocol should be established and maintained at one of the local universities or colleges. To the extent possible, this information should be accessible on the internet. The heritage area should establish a Research Committee of scholars and interested citizens to create a list of appropriate research topics. Students should be recruited to conduct research and prepare papers on topics involving historic, natural, and cultural resources within the heritage area. Local residents should be encouraged to undertake research and write histories of their communities. Whenever possible, this endeavor should observe academic standards of research and documentation.

**Educational Programs** – The heritage area should coordinate local historical groups to present lectures on local history throughout the region. Three to four lectures should be given in participating communities each year. The purpose of the lectures will be to stimulate interest in local history, encourage interaction among individuals interested in local history, and publicize the results of research that is undertaken.

**Interpretation** – The primary educational activity of the heritage area will be to coordinate and market the interpretation of the natural landscape, cultural landscape, communities, and resources throughout the region. Interpretation at participating sites will be based upon the broad interpretive themes presented in Chapter 4 (Interpretation). Sites will also be encouraged to link their interpretation with that of other local and regional sites. The goal of this broad-based interpretation will be to present a comprehensive picture of the region to visitors and residents. A deeper understanding of local resources will encourage support for stewardship initiatives.

**Historic Site Surveys** – The existing inventories of historic resources are uneven across the three counties of the Lower Eastern Shore. According to Wicomico County’s 1999 Land Preservation and Recreation Plan, the county’s resource

inventory includes only 152 sites. The Maryland Historical Trust has inventoried 226 sites in Worcester County, and 400 sites in Somerset County. In association with the Maryland Historical Trust, the heritage area will encourage an update of the surveys in the three counties. The surveys should be undertaken as part of the preparation of county preservation plans. Surveys should include identification of areas of sensitivity with respect to archeological resources. The results of the surveys should be incorporated into GIS databases in the three counties as well as being included in the research database recommended above.

**National Register of Historic Places** – The National Park Service administers two recognition programs: the National Historic Landmark program, and the National Register program. The National Historic Landmark program was created by the Historic Sites Act of 1935. The National Register program dates from 1966, when the U.S. Congress passed the national Historic Preservation Act. The National Register is an official listing of districts, individual structures, and objects found to be of significance at the local, state, or national levels.

The origins of the modern program lie in the urban renewal programs of the 1960s, when community activists began to ask, “Before we tear down buildings, shouldn’t we consider whether they have economic and social value to their communities?” As a result, the federal government created a program to consider the effect its actions on historic resources. Although the National Register program does not provide a guarantee that resources will be saved, it is a valuable tool that can give communities more time to study other options.



Fairmount Academy, a historic school that is owned by the Somerset County Historical Society, forms a part of the Academy Grove National Register Historic District. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

Listing in the National Register: 1) recognizes the significance of the property in accordance with professionally established standards; 2) makes the property eligible for federal rehabilitation tax credits; and 3) provides the property with protection under the Section 106 review process against potentially adverse

impacts of federally funded or permitted projects. Listing on the National Register alone does not impose restrictions on the rights of property owners. The National Register is important to local preservation efforts, however, because its identification process and criteria set legally recognized standards for assessing historic resources.

The National Register recognizes two kinds of resources: 1) individual historic sites (or objects such as skipjacks); and 2) historic districts. Both can be found within the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. On their way to possible designation as National Register sites or districts, resources can receive a “Determination of Eligibility” for the National Register. Within the State of Maryland, the Maryland Historical Trust makes this determination. Before any resource can be fully listed on the National Register, however, the National Park Service must give its final approval.

Historic districts listed on the National Register contain two types of sites: 1) contributing structures and 2) non-contributing structures. Contributing structures are those that contribute to the historical significance of the district; non-contributing structures are those that do not. While these distinctions can be difficult to understand, they are key factors in whether properties are eligible for certain types of federal and state funding (including heritage area tax incentives, as discussed in Chapter 6).

On the Lower Eastern Shore, the number of National Register sites and districts is well below the number that may be eligible:

**Somerset County** – Sixty-three individual sites in Somerset County are listed on the National Register. Several National Register Historic Districts are located in Somerset County: Academy Grove, Crisfield, Manokin, Princess Anne, and Upper Fairmount.

**Wicomico County** – In Wicomico County, 18 sites are individually listed on the National Register. The only Wicomico County community listed on the National Register is the ferry town of Whitehaven, which also has a locally enacted historic district (discussed below under “Local Historic Districts”). The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) considers the communities of Camden, Mardela Springs, and Quantico to be National Register-eligible for Section 106 compliance purposes. MHT may later follow through with a formal Determination of Eligibility (DOE).

**Worcester County** – Worcester County has 28 individual sites listed on the National Register, and one National Register Historic District: the Berlin Commercial District. MHT considers Snow Hill eligible for the National Register for compliance purposes. A National Register Historic District nomination for Pocomoke City is expected to be completed in 2002.

The LESHC will encourage the listing of sites and districts on the National Register by local and county preservation interests, especially those communities that MHT considers eligible for listing as National Register Historic Districts. The listing of individual sites should be implemented as a follow-up to the preparation of historic preservation plans.

**Historic Preservation Plans** – Historic preservation plans have not been created for any of the jurisdictions on the Lower Eastern Shore. While existing comprehensive plans and land preservation and recreation plans frequently mention historic preservation, their information and recommended actions are general in nature. The City of Salisbury and Wicomico County have taken some important steps to preserve the character of local historic districts, but they have not adopted a preservation plan. The Maryland Historical Trust now has a program to support such planning, preservation incentives for local government.

The LESHC should work with interested groups and individuals in the three counties to encourage the development of these plans. Many of the region's cities and larger towns should also consider undertaking them. Preservation plans should include these elements:

- **Historical Overview** – A discussion of the major periods in the area's history;
- **Historic Sites Survey** – A comprehensive survey of historic resources in each county;
- **National Register Eligibility** – Preliminary recommendations on resources that may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;
- **Preservation Issues** – A review of preservation issues in each county
- **Legal Information** – Information on the background and legal basis for historic preservation;
- **Tools and Techniques** – An outline of the tools that are available to encourage historic preservation in the county;
- **Archeological Resources** – A disciplined approach to the identification and preservation of archeological resources; and
- **Implementation Plan** – A plan for preservation actions in the future.

**Local Historic Districts** – In addition to the National Register program that is administered at the state and federal levels, local governments in Maryland can also create locally recognized historic districts. While some of these designations are purely honorary, others include provisions for the formal review of certain types of exterior changes. At its most basic level, historic district designation merely acknowledges the significance that local residents attach to a specific part of their community.

When a local community creates a historic district, an informal inventory of historic buildings within the district is often conducted. This information is often



made available to the public in brochures or walking tours. The district may also feature signs placed by a local government or organization. Without an ordinance designed to protect the buildings within these districts, however, they serve no function other than to publicly recognize the value of local history.

On the Lower Eastern Shore, several jurisdictions have created historic districts:

**Somerset County** – Princess Anne has a locally enacted district, but the town has not established any design review provisions for the buildings within it. This district is a voluntary effort that does not follow the guidelines established by the Maryland Historical Trust.

**Wicomico County** – Wicomico County has a Historic District Commission that reviews proposed changes in the villages of Quantico and Whitehaven. The City of Salisbury has three districts that are within the purview of its own Historic District Commission: Downtown Salisbury, Newtown, and Camden. Both Newtown and Camden are neighborhoods in Salisbury.

**Worcester County** – No local historic districts have been recognized by any jurisdiction in Worcester County, although Snow Hill has considered it. Ocean City is also working on design guidelines that affect its character and heritage



When visitors take the ferry from Somerset County to the historic village Whitehaven in Wicomico County, this restored hotel is one of the first buildings they see. [Photo by Kip Van Blarcom]

**Historic Preservation Commissions** – If county or municipal governments wish to have a formal role in preserving the character of historic districts within their jurisdiction, they must employ the techniques that are made available to them under Maryland state law. As a part of their power to regulate land development and manage growth, jurisdictions are authorized to establish legal provisions for the review of changes within historic districts. To do this, jurisdictions must pass an ordinance that establishes the boundaries of the district, a set of design review guidelines that property owners within the district must follow, and a Historic Preservation Commission to implement them. Property taxes may be adjusted to reflect historic district status at the option of the local jurisdiction.

Design review guidelines are often based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which govern the federal tax credit for rehabilitation. For each historic district, the jurisdiction should supply information to owners and applicants to provide guidance in negotiating the design review process.

Local historic preservation commissions are often empowered to undertake the following tasks:

- **Historic Sites Survey** – Maintain and update the community historic resource inventory;
- **Map of Historic Sites** – Maintain and update a community historic map;
- **Photographic Archive** – Document changes to the community through a photographic archive;
- **Preservation Planning** – Advise the jurisdiction, including its planning commission on historic preservation issues;
- **Land Development Issues** – Advise the planning commission and staff on land development affecting historic resources;
- **Demolition Review** – Administer a demolition review and demolition-by-neglect program; and
- **Interagency Coordination** – Coordinate with other agencies at the state and federal levels on historic preservation issues.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the City of Salisbury and Wicomico County are the only jurisdictions in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area that have Historic District Commissions. The City of Salisbury's Historic District Commission reviews all proposed alterations to buildings within the three Salisbury historic districts. Wicomico County has a separate Historic District Commission that reviews proposed alterations to buildings in the villages of Quantico and Whitehaven. The County Commission is a Certified Local Government Commission and uses the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for its reviews.

**Zoning Overlay Districts** – In establishing the boundaries of a historic district, jurisdictions often create a zoning overlay district that triggers a design review process. A zoning overlay is not a new zoning category, but an additional set of zoning requirements applied in addition to the underlying zoning.

In cooperation with the counties and local preservation interests, the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should encourage and provide incentives for communities to enact local historic districts with design review powers. The heritage area should help to educate communities about the advantages of local historic districts and should draw attention to other Maryland communities where design review processes have been successful. Creating zoning overlay districts and Historic Preservation Commissions would be advantageous for jurisdictions in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, because the new MHT Preservation

Incentives for Local Governments program could provide financial assistance for that purpose.

**Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits** – The federal government provides a 20 percent tax credit for the rehabilitation of buildings for commercial use that are listed on the National Register and the work undertaken in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. In Maryland, the federal government’s rehabilitation tax credit program is run by the Maryland Historical Trust in cooperation with the National Park Service. The Atlantic Hotel in Berlin is an example of a successful rehabilitation project that utilized federal tax credits.

The LESHCH should encourage property owners and communities to use the federal tax credit program to rehabilitate their properties and revitalize their communities. Rehabilitation tax credits can be an important component of an overall community revitalization program, such as the Target Investment Areas designated in this plan. The heritage area’s primary role is to provide information, coordination, and expertise to sites and communities in support of local efforts.

**Maryland Rehabilitation Tax Credits** – Maryland has also enacted a rehabilitation tax credit program that is widely recognized as one of the best in the nation as described in Chapter 6 (Economic Development and Targeted Investment). The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should help to publicize the benefits of the Maryland tax credit, especially when employed together with the federal tax credit. Together, these two programs provide a strong incentive for property owners and non-profits to help in revitalizing their communities.

**Maryland Historical Trust** – The Maryland Historical Trust manages a number of programs that are available to individuals, non-profits, businesses, counties, and municipalities. These programs include the Historic Preservation Grant Fund and Historic Preservation Loan Fund for the acquisition or rehabilitation of historic properties. The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area should assist local communities and sites in the use of these programs for partnership projects of the heritage area.

## **Summary of Actions**

The actions recommended in this chapter are summarized below. These actions and those recommended in all other chapters are also prioritized in Chapter 9 (Implementation). Roles and responsibilities for implementing these actions are also discussed in that chapter.

### **Stewardship Role**

**7.1 LESHCH Stewardship Role** – Take a leadership role in stewardship by: 1) working to conserve the resources that contribute to the quality of

the landscape and visitor experience; 2) being an advocate for organizations and agencies that are seeking to preserve resources, improve their leadership, and local funding; 3) providing technical assistance to citizens that request it; and 4) monitoring, publicizing, and rewarding stewardship.

- 7.2 Stewardship Committee** – Establish a Stewardship Committee to maintain an active partnership with stewardship organizations and interests throughout the region, monitor issues and progress in stewardship activities, and coordinate the actions of the heritage area and its partners with respect to stewardship.
- 7.3 Stewardship Feature in Newsletter** – In the heritage area newsletter, include a regular feature on stewardship issues and activities.
- 7.4 Stewardship Section of Annual Report** – In the heritage area’s annual report, include a stewardship section that outlines issues, highlights priorities, recognizes achievements, and includes a scorecard on progress toward the heritage area’s stewardship goals.
- 7.5 Stewardship Awards Program** – Establish an awards program for stewardship initiatives and accomplishments. Honor organizations, individuals, and programs across the region. Issue the awards on a yearly basis in conjunction with an annual dinner. Widely publicize the awards.
- 7.6 Partnership Structure** – Structure partnerships, programs, and projects to fit into, actively support, and promote existing and potential new stewardship initiatives. The heritage area’s identification of Target Investment Areas (Chapter 6) that support the implementation of greenways in Salisbury and Pocomoke City and the rehabilitation of historic buildings in Pocomoke City and Ocean City is an example of such action.
- 7.7 Interpretation and Marketing** – Facilitate and create interpretation, education, public information, and marketing programs in collaboration with partners that enhance visitors’ and residents’ understanding and appreciation of the region’s resources.

## **Federal Lands and Programs**

- 7.8 Federal Partnership** – Maintain close contacts and a strong partnership with the agencies and individuals who manage federal lands within the region. Initiate heritage area education, interpretation, and recreational programs that are centered upon and support the preservation and appropriate public use of federal lands.

- 7.9 **Public Programming** – Encourage the development of educational programming, interpretation, and appropriate recreational opportunities for visitors and residents related to these federal lands.
- 7.10 **Chesapeake Bay Program** – Participate in and monitor the activities of the Chesapeake Bay Program as whole and its various programs and initiatives. Establish relationships with the many agencies and organizations that collaborate in the program and support their endeavors.
- 7.11 **Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network** – Organize Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area programs to fit into and support the Gateways Network. Become a primary partner and proponent of the Gateways program.

### **State Lands and Programs**

- 7.12 **State Lands** – Maintain close contacts and a strong partnership with the agencies and individuals who manage state lands within the region. Initiate heritage area education, interpretation, and recreational programs that are centered upon and support the preservation and appropriate public use of state lands.
- 7.13 **Maryland Coastal Bays Program** – Become a strong partner in the Maryland Coastal Bays Program. In collaboration with other partners, implement heritage area projects that help create, take advantage of, and support Coastal Bay Program initiatives.
- 7.14 **Rural Legacy Program** – Become a strong partner in implementing Rural Legacy Program initiatives throughout the region. Coordinate with regional partners to establish a region-wide approach to the Rural Legacy Program.

### **Greenways**

- 7.15 **Greenway Initiatives** – Actively support greenway and open space planning by developing programming and coordinating funding for these projects. Encourage a coordinated regional approach to greenway planning and implementation.
- 7.16 **Target Investment Areas** – As outlined in Chapter 6, use Target Investment Areas to support greenway implementation for the Salisbury Crescent in Salisbury and the Pocomoke River Regional Greenway in Pocomoke.

- 7.17 Trails and Interpretation** – In collaboration with partners, develop new bicycle trails, water trails, and scenic trails to get the public into the region’s greenways. Develop interpretation for trails to enhance interest and understanding of the region’s natural resources.

### **Private Conservation Lands**

- 7.18 Private Conservation Initiatives** –Support the work of local and regional land trusts. Forge close working relationships and collaborative projects with these organizations and encourage them to develop a region-wide action strategy.
- 7.19 Public Education** – Support a public education program to inform landowners about the financial and estate planning opportunities related to conservation easements and the donation of lands.

### **Agricultural Land**

- 7.20 Support for Agriculture** – Support the preservation of farming and farmland within the three counties. Actively encourage the coordination of existing programs among the counties. Encourage each county to undertake an agricultural development plan, or work toward the goal of a regional plan for the Lower Eastern Shore.
- 7.21 Agricultural Zoning** – Encourage the three counties to explore more effective forms of agricultural zoning in accordance with state-supported models that have been proven effective. Support Worcester County’s already highly protective agricultural zoning, and encourage Somerset and Wicomico Counties to develop state-certified programs.
- 7.22 Agricultural Easements** – Join with other organizations in advocating strong and effective programs that support the economic viability of farming and make the sale of agricultural easements an attractive option for farmers.

### **Growth Management**

- 7.23 Support Growth Management Initiatives** – Promote and support county efforts to identify and implement strategies that preserve landscape and community character. Serve as a catalyst for the coordination of growth management strategies among interest groups and across governmental boundaries.

- 7.24 Community Design Guidelines** – Encourage each county in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area to adopt design guidelines for new commercial development. Stress the need for landscape design standards that use indigenous plants, because these plants can help new development to blend into the wider landscape. Encourage signage design guidelines and subdivision options that preserve significant amounts of open space.

### **Historic and Cultural Resources**

- 7.25 Landscape Approach** – Encourage a landscape approach to the preservation of historic and cultural resources. Preserve landscape contexts as well as individual buildings and structures. Concentrate upon preserving communities and community character as opposed to isolated resources.
- 7.26 Research Program** – With the assistance of local colleges and universities, help to coordinate a research program that focuses on local history. Involve local scholars and interested citizens.
- 7.27 Educational Programs** – Encourage local historical groups to present lectures on local history throughout the region. Three to four lectures should be given in participating communities each year.
- 7.28 Interpretation** – Coordinate and market the interpretation of the natural landscape, cultural landscape, communities, and resources throughout the region. Base interpretation on the themes presented in this plan. Link interpretation between participating sites. Use interpretation to create a comprehensive picture of the region for visitors and residents, and to encourage support for stewardship initiatives.
- 7.29 Historic Resource Inventories** – Support an update of the historic resource inventories in the three counties as part of the preparation of historic preservation plans in counties and municipalities.
- 7.30 Historic Preservation Plans** – Encourage the preparation of preservation plans for counties and municipalities.
- 7.31 Local Historic Districts** – Encourage and provide incentives for communities to establish local historic districts and seek the protections available to those districts under Maryland law.
- 7.32 Historic Preservation Commissions** – Encourage jurisdictions in the heritage area to establish Historic Preservation Commissions to review proposed alterations to buildings in local historic districts. Even if

jurisdictions choose not to give them formal review powers, historic preservation commissions can fulfill educational outreach goals.

- 7.33 National Register** – Encourage county and local preservation groups to pursue the listing of districts and sites on the National Register of Historic Places. High priority should be placed on communities that are currently recognized as eligible for the National Register by the Maryland Historical Trust. The listing of sites should be an ongoing project implemented as follow-up to the preparation of county and municipal preservation plans.
- 7.34 Federal and State Rehabilitation Tax Credits** – Assist property owners and communities in using the federal and state rehabilitation tax credit programs to rehabilitate their properties and revitalize their communities.
- 7.35 Maryland Historical Trust Programs** – Assist local communities and sites in the use of Trust programs such as the Historic Preservation Grant Fund and Historic Preservation Loan Fund for partnership projects in the heritage area.