



Backgrounder

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FY16 Rivers of the Chesapeake

Background

At the October 2015 Executive Council meeting, members signed a letter to Senators and Representatives asking them to support appropriations of the \$39.7 million of Land and Water Conservation Fund monies requested for the Chesapeake Bay watershed in President Obama's 2016 budget. More than \$33 million of the requested funding was part of the *Rivers of the Chesapeake* collaborative proposal.

The *Rivers of the Chesapeake* proposal focuses on some of the great rivers of the Chesapeake Bay: the Potomac, Rappahannock, James, York, Nanticoke, and Susquehanna Rivers and their watersheds. Across these rivers, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service, in collaboration with state agencies and non-profit partners, identified six focus areas for inclusion in the fiscal year 2016 proposal. These focus areas represent a strategic subset of broader landscapes across the greater 64,000 square mile Chesapeake watershed. Within the six proposed focus areas, there are over 21,000 acres in conservation opportunities.

Current Status

In the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016, Congress included nearly \$11 million for land conservation in the Chesapeake through the Land & Water Conservation Fund. Congress provided \$10.7 million to the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service to conserve key lands that celebrate our region's history, provide recreational opportunities, protect water quality, create connected corridors, conserve wildlife habitat for iconic Chesapeake Bay species, protect scenic views and safeguard irreplaceable landscapes. Table 1 summarizes the projects included in the funding bill and the *Rivers of the Chesapeake* proposal for conservation in the Chesapeake.

Table 1. Chesapeake Projects in Appropriations Act, 2016

Agency	Acres	Dollars (in thousands)
BLM -Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area (MD)	42	191
BLM - Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (VA)	407	2,400
USFWS - Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge (MD)	392	1,511
USFWS - Rappahannock River National Wildlife Refuge (VA)	160	1,600
USFS - George Washington-Jefferson NF (VA/WV)	958	1,990
NPS - Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (DC/DE/MD/VA)	175	2,237
Piscataway Park (MD)	1	571
Gettysburg National Military Park (PA)	18	285
TOTAL	2,152	10,785

Application of LWCF Monies by National Park Service

In June 2016, the National Park Service, with the assistance of The Conservation Fund and in collaboration with landowners Bob and Lynn Ripley and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), purchased approximately 264 acres of land in Gloucester County VA encompassing the Indian town of Werowocomoco.

Werowocomoco, located at Purtan Bay on the north side of the York River in Virginia, is the location of the leader Powhatan's headquarters during the time of the English arrival at Jamestown and the location where Captain John Smith was taken after his capture. It was here that Smith met the influential Powhatan and his daughter Pocahontas. Werowocomoco is a rarity in Virginia archeological finds -- an intact, relatively undisturbed, town site and cultural landscape. Archaeology indicates it had been a major town for several centuries before Powhatan, making it a logical home for Powhatan as the number of tribute-paying tribes increased. As one of the most important American Indian sites in the eastern United States, its protection, study and interpretation to the public are of high importance.

Through the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the *Rivers of the Chesapeake* collaborative proposal, the President's Budget requested and Congress appropriated funds in several fiscal years to support land acquisition along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. These LWCF funds made acquisition of Werowocomoco possible.