Developing Priority Watershed Areas for

Mapping Indigenous Cultural Landscapes of the Greater Chesapeake Bay

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2016

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this project was to develop a prioritized list for modeling Indigenous Cultural Landscapes for the tidal Chesapeake. The project was undertaken as an initiative of the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay office, which supports and manages the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. One of the goals of the trail is to interpret Native life in the Middle Atlantic in the early years of colonization by Europeans. The Indigenous Cultural Landscape (ICL) concept, developed as an important tool for identifying Native landscapes, has been incorporated into the Smith Trail's Comprehensive Management Plan in an effort to identify Native communities along the trail as they existed in the early 17th-century and as they exist today. Identifying ICLs along the Smith Trail serves land and cultural conservation, education, historic preservation, and economic development goals. Identifying ICLs further empowers descendant indigenous communities to participate fully in achieving these goals. Previous ICL studies have taken place in the Nanticoke watershed on the Delmarva Peninsula, the Mattawoman and Nanjemoy Creeks in southern Maryland, and the Susquehanna River at the head of the Bay.

While the project focused on the tidal Chesapeake, the project area included a 10-mile radius area extending from tidal shores to include as much of the landscape as possible. The project area consists of approximately 17,170 square miles of water and land, extending from the mouth of the Bay to the Susquehanna River. From east to west, the project extends from within the Delmarva Peninsula to the Fall Line, or to Richmond, Virginia. This region has a human history stretching back thousands of years and was a well populated region during Captain John Smith's voyages to explore and map the Chesapeake in 1608. Following the arrival of European settlers in the early 17th century, the region remained a largely indigenous landscape until later in the century, when English encroachment created serious challenges for the Native people residing in the region. Despite displacement through the end of the 17th and 18th centuries, descendants of the Native occupants remain throughout the region to this day.

The primary goal of this project was to develop a priority list for modeling future ICLs in that part of the Chesapeake Bay associated with Smith's voyages. This goal was addressed through the development of a sensitivity model reflecting settlement activity during the Late Woodland period (ca. 900-1600 AD) through the early 17th century. By examining relationships between known archaeological resources and their surrounding environment, landscape variables correlating to site presence were used to develop a model of settlement for the greater Bay landscape. Analysis of this model demonstrates that it can successfully identify 77% of known archaeological sites of the focus periods on 27% of the total land area. The model, while generated on a relatively large regional scale, both compares well and contrasts with Smith's own observations in 1608. Where Smith's map and the sensitivity model differ suggests ways in which Smith's map might be interpreted. For example, Smith shows sparse settlement along wide water bodies, such as the Chesapeake shoreline, but dense settlement along more narrow rivers and tributaries. The absence of settlements in certain areas, then, could be a function of distance visibility, impacting Smith's ability to fully record settlements that may have in fact existed.

In collaboration with staff from the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay office, other variables for identifying priority areas for examination were identified. These variables included the presence of active indigenous communities, areas threatened by development and/or climate change, and areas of potential archaeological and historical significance. Using these variables and variables previously identified for modeling ICLs, recommendations for future ICL studies throughout the tidal Chesapeake were developed based on a synthesis of the available data. Watershed regions with active indigenous communities, areas

of archaeological sensitivity, areas of dense settlement activity as denoted by Smith, and potentially threatened areas have been deemed the highest priority for further study. Fourteen specific watersheds have been identified and ranked using these criteria. Of these fourteen specific watersheds, the Nanticoke and Rappahannock rivers have already been or will be the subject of ICL studies. These two areas have been removed from the priority list. Also previously completed was a project focused on the Nanjemoy and Mattawoman creeks, a portion of Priority Number 8, the Potomac River from Washington D.C. to Port Tobacco. The twelve Priority Watershed Areas recommended for future ICL studies include the following:

1. York River (river's mouth to West Point);
2. Pamunkey River;
3. Mattaponi River ;
4. James River (Chickahominy River to river's mouth);
5. James River (Richmond to and including the Chickahominy River);
6. Patuxent River;
7. Potomac River (Port Tobacco to Point Lookout);
8. Potomac River (from Washington DC to Port Tobacco, including the Anacostia River);
9. Chester River;
10. Choptank River;
11. Pocomoke River;
12. Wicomico River (Eastern Shore).