

## Introduction of the Indigenous Cultural Landscape and a Timeline of its progress

### Overview

The concept of the Indigenous Cultural Landscape (ICL), first introduced as part of the *Comprehensive Management Plan* for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, is intended to represent large landscapes from the perspective of American Indian nations at the time of their first contact with Europeans. These landscapes comprise the cultural and natural resources that would have supported the historic lifestyles and settlement patterns of an Indian group in their totality. The concept attempts to demonstrate that American Indian places were not confined to the sites of houses, towns, or settlements, and that the concept of the American Indian view of one's homeland is holistic rather than compartmentalized into the discrete site elements typically used in our language today such as "hunting grounds", "villages", or "sacred sites".

Indigenous Cultural Landscapes are a recognized trail-related resource along the John Smith Trail. Visitor experiences of the trail's major themes – John Smith's voyages, American Indian cultures of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and today, and the Chesapeake environment of then and now – depend on the continued presence of key resources along the trail, including landscapes evocative of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

To further define and study Indigenous Cultural Landscapes, a team of American Indian tribal members, state historic preservation and natural resource officials, archaeologists, and NPS staff was convened to outline criteria, identify landscapes in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and conduct outreach to conservation and interpretive education practitioners regionally and nationally.

### Suggested Criteria

Initial suggested criteria for identifying Indigenous Cultural Landscapes in the Chesapeake Bay region were as follows:

*Central indigenous community support criteria (landscape should include several of these):*

- Good agricultural soil (fine sandy loam, 1-2% grade)
- Fresh water source (because river or creek water may be brackish)
- Transportation tributary adjacent
- Landing place (confluence of tributaries optimal)
- Marshes nearby (for waterfowl, shellfish, reeds, tubers, muskrat, turtles)
- Brushy areas (for small game, berries)
- Primary or mixed deciduous forest (can be restored or restorable, for larger game, nuts, bark, firewood)
- Uplands that could support hunting activities (are supporting a variety of wildlife)

*Additional desirable attributes:*

- Proximity to known American Indian community (documented through ethnohistory or archaeology; may be Contact-era or later)
- Protection from wind
- High terrace landform

*Criteria for smaller or connective parcels:*

- Areas of recurrent use for food or medicine acquisition (shell middens, plant gathering sites)
- Areas of recurrent use for tool acquisition (quarries)
- Places with high probability for ceremonial or spiritual use (even if not documented), or known by a descendent community to have been used for ceremony
- Trails used as footpaths (usually became Colonial roads, sometimes are today's highways and local roads)
- Parcels that can be interpreted as supporting activities of Indian community sustainability, such as trading places or meeting places
- Places associated with ancestors, or part of a descendent community's past known through tribal history, ethno history, or archaeology

## Major Milestones

Major events in the timeline of the development of the Indigenous Cultural Landscape have included the following:

**2010** Introduction of the concept in the Comprehensive Management Plan of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

First meeting of the ICL National Team

**2011 to present** Presentation of the concept at conferences, including the George Wright Society, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Park Conservation Association's Summit on 2016, Preservation Virginia, Preservation Maryland, Society for Applied Anthropology, Preservation Pennsylvania, and National Alliance for Preservation Commission.

Updates for the ICL National Team via webinars and newsletters. As a result of the webinars, a notification mailing list was added to inform those who were interested in the development of the concept.

Other federal agencies interested in the ICL added to the National Team.

**2011** Inclusion of the concept in the Land Preservation Plan for the Captain John Smith Trail.

**2012** Prototype and methodology study commissioned. At the recommendation of the ICL National Team to refine the criteria and develop a methodology for the identification of ICLs, a team from the University of Maryland was commissioned to create an annotated bibliography, and undertake a project study on the criteria and methodology. The Nanticoke River watershed, which had previously received interest from state agency partners in Maryland, was chosen for the initial studies.

**2013** ICL identification and mapping project begun in the Lower Susquehanna River watershed, with further research planned. Annotated bibliography completed by the University of Maryland team distributed and revised according to ICL National Team suggestions.

**2014** *Summary Report of Indigenous Cultural Landscapes Methodology and Recommendations for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail* published on the Chesapeake Bay office's Indigenous Cultural Landscape website at <http://www.nps.gov/chba/parknews/indigenous-cultural-landscapes.htm>. This is a summary report of the University of Maryland study team's work on the criteria and methodology, with recommendations for those who want to apply the methodology to identify ICLs in other areas.

*Prototype Methodology Indigenous Cultural Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail: Landscapes Study for the Nanticoke River Watershed* also published on the ICL webpage. This is a thorough report of prototype ICL identification and mapping research, based on the methodology and undertaken in the Nanticoke watershed, with maps of the results.

## Next Steps

Further study of ICLs by the NPS Chesapeake Bay office will include additional reporting by a team from Bucknell University within the Lower Susquehanna River watershed to assist in the implementation of that segment of the Captain John Smith Trail. That team will be led by Dr. Katherine Faull. We will also begin a multiyear ICL study in the Nanjemoy peninsula area of southern Maryland, conducted by a team from St. Mary's College of Maryland led by Dr. Julia A. King. Their initial efforts will focus on the definition, collection, and preliminary mapping of existing environmental, historical, and cultural resource information about the Nanjemoy and Mattawoman watersheds in collaboration with members of the state-recognized Piscataway groups and other stakeholders.