

Chesapeake National Recreation Area (CNRA) Informational Session: Chesapeake Bay Commission

MAY 4, 2023 – 1:30 P.M.

The Offices of Senator Van Hollen and Congressman Sarbanes

A National Park Unit for the Chesapeake

- The CNRA would elevate individual sites of cultural, historic, environmental, and recreational importance across the Bay as a “string of pearls.”
- The designation of National Recreation Area would help conserve the Bay, increase public access, and deliver additional federal resources to spur economic growth and prosperity.



CNRA Timeline

1986: First call for a Chesapeake National Park- idea for “string of pearls” linked land-based sites around Chesapeake

2004: NPS releases a special resource study that finds the Chesapeake Bay is “unquestionably nationally significant and a major part of the nation’s heritage.”

2019: Sen. Van Hollen begins working with Rep. Sarbanes, requesting drafting service from NPS to outline legislation.

2020: Maryland Governor Larry Hogan and Virginia Governor Ralph Northam share their backing in letters to Congress.

2021: The lawmakers announce a working group to foster further discussion with stakeholders and community members on the project.

2022: The lawmakers release a set of guiding principles and a draft legislative text.

CNRA Guiding Principles

Senator Van Hollen and Congressman Sarbanes believe that any legislation creating a Chesapeake National Recreation Area should align with the following principles, which were developed in collaboration with the CNRA Working Group:

1. National Significance of Bay
2. Land-based Proposal
3. Respect Land Rights
4. Public Engagement
5. Alignment with Goals of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement
6. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
7. Increasing Public Access
8. Increasing Tourism in the Bay Watershed
9. Creating a Culture of Stewardship
10. Citizen Advisory Commission

www.vanhollen.senate.gov/cnra

CNRA Advisory Commission

The Advisory Commission of 19 members will represent Maryland and Virginia equally.

Membership will consist of:

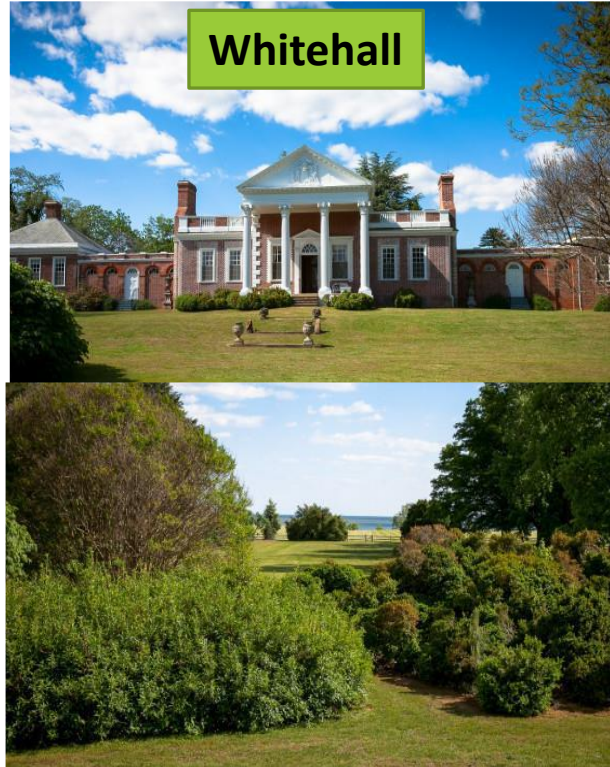
- 8 representatives with **knowledge of environmental, recreational, environmental justice, cultural or historic resources, education, or interpretation;**
- 2 representatives with **knowledge of the agricultural interests of the Bay;**
- 2 representatives with **knowledge of the commercial fishing interests of the Bay;**
- 2 **youth representatives;**
- 2 **Tribal representatives** from state and federally recognized Tribes that are traditionally associated with the Chesapeake Bay;
- 2 representatives, 1 **selected by each of the Governors of Maryland and Virginia;** and
- the **Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission**

Initial CNRA Sites

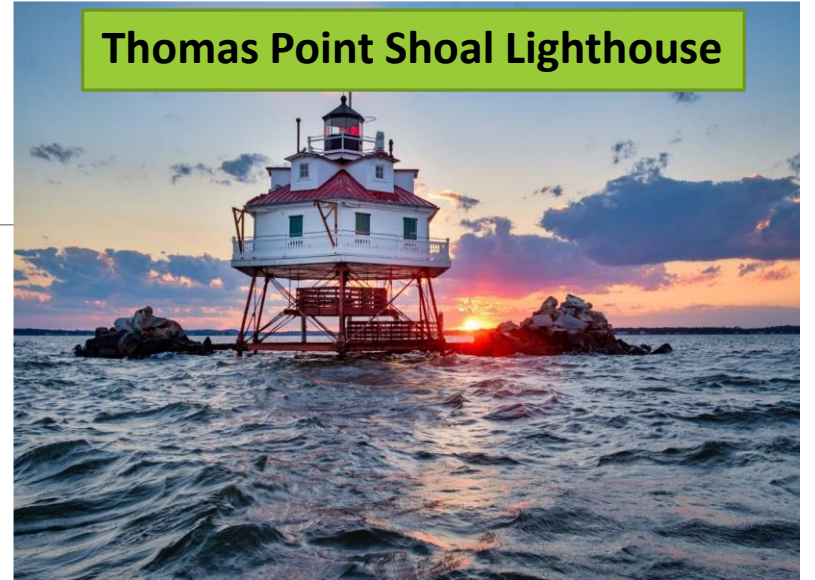
Fort Monroe – North Beach



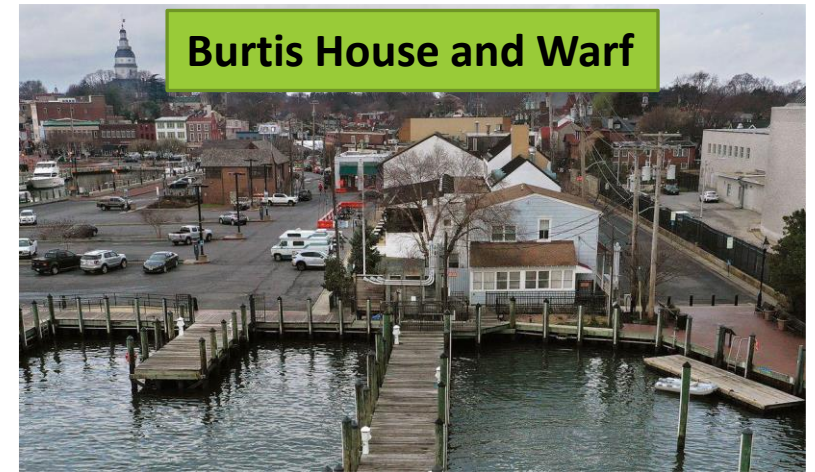
Whitehall



Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse



Burtis House and Warf



Proposed CNRA Legislation **WILL:**

- **Permit the NPS to acquire or partner with Burtis House, Whitehall Manor, Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse, and the North Beach of Fort Monroe to serve as the first sites within the CNRA;**
- **Establish a CNRA Advisory Commission** of local stakeholders who will advise NPS;
- **ONLY allow NPS to acquire additional lands or property through voluntary means** – donation, purchase from a willing seller, exchange, or transfer from another agency in consultation with the CNRA Advisory Commission;
- **Allow NPS to enter into enter into voluntary “opt-in” partner site and cooperative management agreements** with and provide federal funding to eligible entities that wish to be included in the CNRA, in consultation with the CNRA Advisory Commission.

Proposed CNRA Legislation **WILL NOT:**

- Authorize NPS to impose any additional regulations on recreational or commercial business activities in the Chesapeake Bay waters, including existing water navigation and fishing activities;
- Authorize NPS to supersede state authority in fish and wildlife management efforts;
- Authorize NPS to acquire property from unwilling landowners; nor
- Authorize NPS to impose any additional regulations governing non-participating private or public landowners.



Draft Legislation Release

- Public Comment Period:
11/14/2022 – 05/01/2023
www.vanhollen.senate.gov/cnra
- Following public input and revisions, the bill will be introduced in Congress.
- Once passed, the CNRA Advisory Commission will start developing criteria and a multi-year public engagement effort will begin to create NPS planning documents.

NPS Planning and Management

- Management planning is required by law (54 USC 100502) for each NPS unit.
- A park's planning portfolio extends from the foundation document to site-specific resource and visitor use management plans, creating a logical, trackable guide for future park management actions.



**Park Planning Includes Purposeful
Civic Engagement and Public Review**

NPS Planning: Specific Features

- Transportation and development plans – 6 months to 2 years
 - **Active Transportation Planning Assistance** – minimum of 6 months:
This planning assistance provides [...] professional transportation planning support and technical assistance [...], particularly for efforts that reach outside NPS boundaries. Highlights alternative transportation systems and projects [in NPS units] and increasingly requires working with state and local governments and other partners. [Helps] parks identify and engage partners and stakeholders, evaluate constraints, and/or develop collaborative action plans to coordinate park and partners' commitments to project implementation.
- Cultural and natural resource preservation – nearly two dozen plans and studies, timelines vary
- Identification of visitor carrying capacity

Existing National Recreation Areas



Local Economic Impact of NRAs

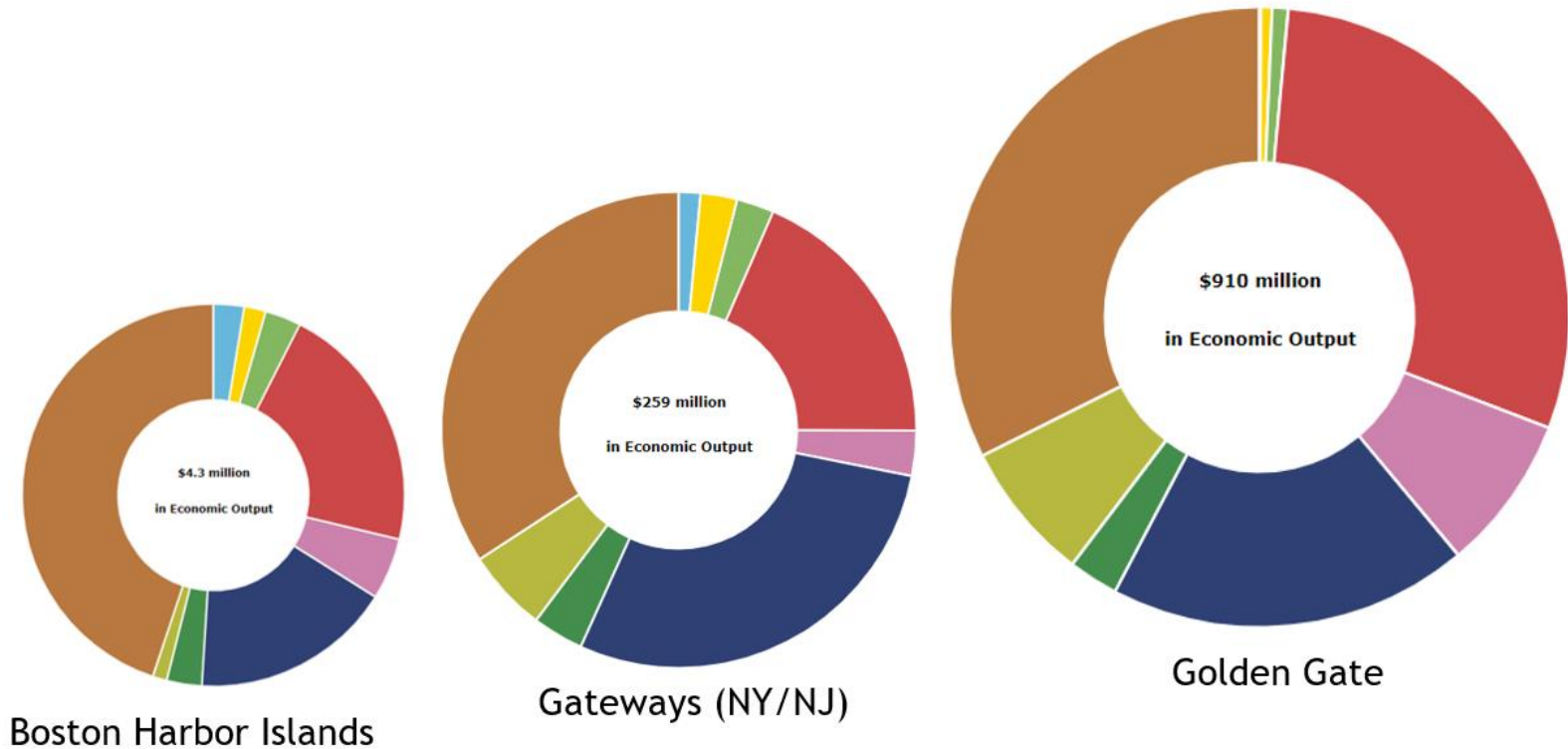
SAMPLE NRAs ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITIES (2021)

Directly Affected Sectors

- Camping
- Gas
- Groceries
- Hotels
- Recreation Industries
- Restaurants
- Retail
- Transportation

Secondary Effects

- Secondary Effects



Questions?

www.vanhollen.senate.gov/cnra

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