

WATER TRAILS IN CHARLES COUNTY, MD

The Wild Side of the Potomac River

Welcome to Charles County in Southern Maryland, home to a wealth of natural, cultural and historic treasures, diverse natural landscapes, and scenic views of the Potomac. Located just 20 miles southeast of the Nation's Capital, Charles County is a prosperous and bustling community that still maintains small town characteristics. Its location along the Southern Potomac River provides numerous opportunities for water-based recreation such as paddling, fishing, and bird watching.



A scenic view of the Potomac River shoreline.

Historically, Charles County's economy has been based on agriculture – its rural landscapes interspersed with small towns and farming villages. But in the last decade, the county has seen tremendous suburban expansion. The population has grown steadily from 111,600 in 1995, to 140,400 in 2006. In spite of its growth, the county maintains a unique and diverse variety of natural areas and protected open space.

Natural Resource Features And Conservation

Situated on the coastal plain of Southern Maryland, Charles County has a wide variety of habitats ranging from densely developed city/suburban to rural farmland and pristine natural areas. The County is distinguished by many natural resource features including:



Charles County features a variety of habitats.

- 183-miles of tidal shoreline and many square miles of open tidal waters
- The largest Blue Heron Rookery on the East Coast, located in Nanjemoy;
- The second largest Bald Eagle population in the State of Maryland;
- One of the highest populations of breeding Red-Headed Woodpeckers in Maryland;
- One of the most productive tributaries of the Potomac, Mattawoman Creek, with a high diversity of fish, and healthy stands of aquatic vegetation;
- The largest hardwood swamp in the state, Zekiah Swamp, which is recognized by the State of Maryland for its unique ecological importance and received the highest rating of all natural areas in the Chesapeake Bay region by the Smithsonian Institution.

The Potomac River and Fisheries



American Shad (alosa sapidissima)

The Potomac River is the second largest tributary to the Chesapeake Bay. With more than 296 miles of Potomac shoreline, the tidal Potomac in Charles County is an important component of the Bay's

commercial and recreational fishing industries, providing vital spawning grounds for the 64 documented fish species found in the waters below Washington D.C. The Potomac has eight major tributaries and varies in width from less than 1 mile near Indian Head to over 10 miles at its confluence at Point Lookout.

American Shad and Potomac Fisheries: During Colonial times, American Shad was one of the most economically important fish to inhabit the Potomac River. George Washington was one of the many Potomac residents that harvested American Shad. Pollution, over-fishing, and habitat loss decimated the species in the 1950s and a harvest moratorium was instituted in Maryland. In 1995, the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin began a stocking program with support from its federal, state, and non-profit partners. The program has been quite successful, and today, after its long absence, the migratory American Shad is making a comeback in the Potomac.

Anadromous Fish: Anadromous fish are species that live in marine environments and migrate to freshwater to spawn. Many species, such as striped bass, yellow perch, white perch, shad and river herring, have substantial economic benefit



Yellow Perch (perca flavescens)

for commercial and recreational fisheries. There has been a dramatic decline in these species in the Chesapeake Bay system due, in part, to deteriorating water quality that impacts the early life stages of the fish.

Natural Heritage Areas and Endangered Species:

There are several endangered species habitats throughout the County including: Long's Bittercress (*Cardamine longii*) on the Federal endangered species list, and Sensitive Joint-Vetch (*Aeschynomene virginica*), which is on Maryland's list of endangered plants.



Long's Bittercress (top) and Joint-Vetch (bottom)

Communities that contain one or more threatened or endangered species or wildlife species in need of conservation are designated as Natural Heritage Areas (NHA). These areas contain a unique blend of geological, hydrological, climatological or biological features, and are considered to be among the best statewide examples of its kind. Charles County has four designated Natural Heritage Areas: Allen's Fresh, Chicamuxen Creek, Popes Creek, and Upper Nanjemoy Creek.

Birding and Wildlife Viewing

Charles County has many large and small lakes, ponds, and extensive wetlands. Virtually all forested areas in the county are second-growth, but some are quite old. The varied topography and proximity to water make Charles County a natural destination. Paddling Charles County's water trails provides a unique opportunity to explore, learn about the diverse habitats, and view all kinds of wildlife. Here is a sampling of some of the County's most celebrated natural residents.



Nesting Bald Eagles are becoming more common in Charles County.

The Bald Eagle: Over the past few years, more and more residents and tourists to Charles County are reporting the thrill of watching a bald eagle soar over the Potomac shoreline and listening to its call. Recently de-listed from the federal list of threatened species, the Bald Eagle is making a comeback, with the number of nest sites in Charles County increasing each year. Based on the latest survey conducted by the Maryland Forest, Park and Wildlife Service, nesting sites in Charles County grew from 41 in 1993 to 57 in 2004.



A Great Blue Heron.

Colonial Water Bird Nesting Sites: These are sites where water birds, such as herons, egrets, terns and glossy ibis, congregate or colonize during the nesting season. These species have declined dramatically due to habitat loss and human disturbances, particularly during the nesting season. The Great Blue Heron is the only colonial water bird known to nest in Charles County. The largest Blue Heron rookery on the East Coast, north of Florida, is located in Nanjemoy, and is managed by The Nature Conservancy.

Historic Waterfowl Staging and Concentration Areas: Waterfowl nest and rear their young in tidal waters, tributary streams, and tidal and non-tidal wetlands. Waterfowl also derive at least part of their food from aquatic plants and animals, gathered during migration and throughout the winter season. Examples of waterfowl found in Charles County are Common Goldeneye, Canvas Back, Lesser Scalp, Greater Scalp and Bufflehead ducks.

Forest Interior Dwelling Birds:

There are 19 species of forest interior dwelling birds that are afforded protection in Maryland -- many of them are neotropical migrants. To breed successfully, many of these birds need large forest tracts of 50 acres or more, or corridors connecting larger forested tracts. The greatest threat to forest interior dwelling birds is increased fragmentation of forest due to land development.



Cardinals are among the colorful birds that can be seen in forested areas of the County.

For more information on birding in Charles County contact the Maryland Audubon Society at 301-375-8522 or Charles County Economic Development and Tourism at 1-800-766-3386. A copy of *Charles County Birds: Your Guide to 321 Species of Birds* is also available on-line at www.visitcharlescounty.com

Wildlife Viewing Ethics

- View wild animals from an appropriate distance. If animals change their behavior when you approach, you are too close.
- Stay clear of nests, dens and rookeries.
- Do not touch or feed wild animals.
- Do not use calls or whistles, or try to rouse animals in any way.
- Limit your stay to minimize stress on the animals.
- Do not allow pets to interfere with wild animals.



Butterflies and Dragons

Maryland is home to about 151 species of butterflies. Of these, 129 species regularly occur in Maryland and 22 others are either irregular vagrants, such as the Gulf Fritillary, or were once a part of our landscape, but have now vanished, such as the Regal Fritillary.

Maryland's butterflies range in size from the large, showy Giant Swallowtail to the tiny and easily overlooked Eastern Tailed-Blue. Some are relatively camouflaged to blend into their surroundings, like the Tawny Emperor, while others are brilliantly colored to warn potential predators of their poisonous taste, like the Monarch.



For more on butterflies visit the DNR Heritage Website at www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/mbutterflies.asp

The dragonfly dates back at least 320 millions years, long before dinosaurs roamed the earth. Today nearly 5,000 types are known worldwide. Maryland is home to 180 species – 60 percent are considered rare or uncommon – including the treetop emerald, the jewel wing and the blackwater bluet.



Dragonflies are generally larger than Damsels and hold their wings horizontal when perched.

Dragonflies are actually two closely-related groups of insects: damselflies and true dragonflies. Dragons tend to be larger, more robust and stronger fliers; they typically extend their wings horizontally. Damsels are comparatively small, dainty in appearance and weaker fliers; their wings are usually lifted vertically and folded together above the body. They feed on a variety of mosquitoes, midges, and black and deer flies.

Dragonflies have excellent vision. Their compound eyes contain 28,000 facets, whereas a housefly has only 4,000. For more information on dragonflies visit DNR's Heritage Website at www.dnr.state.md.us/mydnr/CreatureFeature/dragonfly.asp.

Religious Freedom Scenic Byway

America's roots of "toleration" run throughout Southern Maryland, where the original English settlers – Protestant and Catholic alike – recognized the rights of individuals to hold dissenting religious opinions. Now, such freedoms are celebrated at long established places of worship all over the region.

The scenic byway route includes several branches that reach toward the Potomac River, and incorporates many of the nation's oldest churches, including the site of the first Roman Catholic Mass held in English speaking America.

To learn more about the Religious Freedom Scenic Byway contact the Maryland Office of Tourism at 1-866-639-3526 or visit www.mdifun.org



The Religious Freedom Byway features historic churches and cemeteries, such as that of St. Ignatius, shown here.

Paddling and Boating Safety Tips

Although many Charles County streams and coves are suitable for beginners, there are areas of open water that are subject to tidal influence, high winds and strong currents. Be prepared! Review these guidelines before getting on the water.

- Wear a properly-fitted, U.S. Coast Guard approved, lifejacket while on the water. (See *Maryland Boating Regulations below*)
- Paddle with a group, not by yourself. Leave a "float plan" for your trip with a friend or family member.
- Know your route and any potential hazards along it in advance. Review maps, navigation aids, and weather conditions or marine forecasts before launching. Get off the water immediately if you see lightning.
- Dress appropriately for weather or water conditions, including air and water temperature, and carry a supply of food and water adequate for the length of your trip.
- Never paddle farther from shore than you are prepared to swim, and stay at least 100 yards away from all moving vessels, piers and other restricted areas.
- Bring a spare paddle or pole and carry a signaling device (i.e. flashlight, horn/whistle, cell phone, a bright flag or mirror)
- Do not stand up in your boat, and avoid weight shifts that may cause capsiz. Do not carry more weight or persons than your boat is designed to safely accommodate.

Maryland Boating and Fishing Regulations

Personal Flotation Devices: Boats propelled by oars or paddles are required to carry one PFD of either Type I, II, III, or V, for each person on board, regardless of length. All motorized craft 16 – 65 feet must carry a Type I, II, III, or V, for each person on board, plus one extra Type IV. Children under age 7 must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD at all times in any boat under 21 feet. (MD State Law).

Boat Registration: All boats, commercial or recreational, must be registered in Maryland if equipped with any kind of primary or auxiliary mechanical propulsion; not currently registered with the U.S. Coast Guard (documented) and; being used principally in Maryland. For more information visit www.dnr.state.md.us/boating/registration/

Fishing Licenses: The Potomac River and its tributaries may be fished with a Maryland Tidal Fishing License which allows fishing from January 1 through December 31. License fees are \$15 for Maryland residents and \$15 for non-residents. For more information visit www.dnr.state.md.us/service/license.asp

Leave No Trace Ethics

Please practice the following stewardship principles of Leave No Trace:

- 1) Plan Ahead and Prepare
 - Know your route and the limitations of yourself and your group.
 - Carry the proper equipment and clothing.
 - Notify someone of the time you intend to return.
- 2) Camp and Recreate in Designated Areas
 - Use designated campsites.
 - Leave camping and picnic sites cleaner than you found them.
 - Keep groups small and avoid trampling plants.
 - Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations securely.
 - Keep campfires small. Burn all wood and coals to ash, and put out with water.
- 3) Properly Dispose of All Waste
 - Do all cleaning and washing as far away from waterways as possible.
 - Scatter dishwasher and use biodegradable soaps.
 - Clean fish at designated areas away from campsites.
 - Carry out all waste and then dispose of it in proper recepticals. Use a portable toilet or other approved method to pack out solid human waste and paper products.
- 4) Leave What You Find and Be Considerate of Other Visitors
 - Respect our natural and cultural heritage - leave all items as you found them.
 - Keep noise to a minimum - enjoy the music of nature.
 - Respect private property and the privacy of others.



For more information on Leave No Trace ethics visit www.lnt.org, call 1-800-332-4100, or contact your local resource managers for additional guidance.

For More Information

Charles County Economic Development and Tourism
103 Centennial Street, Suite C
La Plata, MD 20646
phone: 1-800-766-3386
www.visitcharlescounty.com



Charles County Parks Department
1001 Radio Station Road
La Plata, MD 20646
phone: 301-932-3470
www.charlescounty.org/pf/pg/parks/



DNR Boating Services Unit
The Boating Facilities and Access Planning Division of DNR coordinates the creation of a statewide system of water trails and public access to waterways. Programs in this unit also provide technical and design assistance to local governments. phone: 1-877-620-8DNR
www.dnr.state.md.us/boating/

In Case of Emergency
In case of emergency, contact the Sheriff's Department Dispatch at (301) +911 and specify that you are in Charles County, Maryland or call the Maryland Natural Resource Police at 410-260-8888.

Project coordination, mapping and design for this publication was provided by the Boating Services Unit of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with assistance from the National Park Service Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Funds for printing and distribution were made available through the Charles County Commissioners and a Recreational Trails grant from the State Highway Administration (SHA) to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.



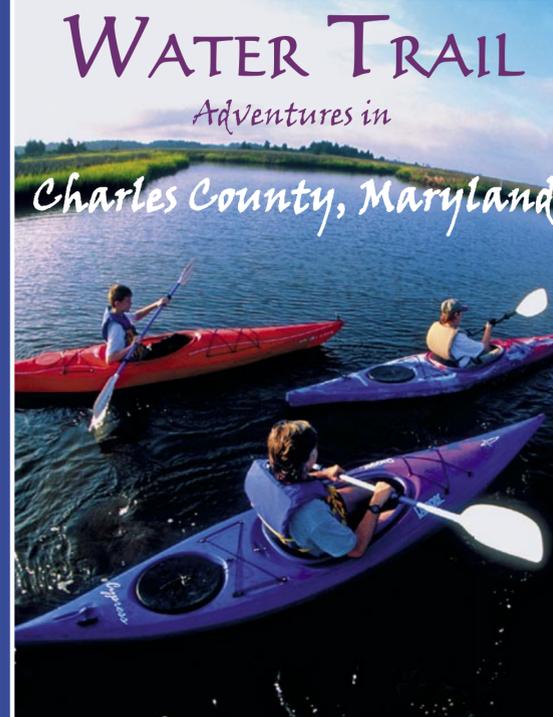
Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony Brown, Lt. Governor
John R. Griffin, Secretary MD DNR

The facilities and services of the Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin or physical or mental disability.

Call toll free in Maryland, 1-877-620-8DNR ext. 8780. TTY users call via the Maryland Relay. Accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request. Seven days advance notice is requested.

1st printing July 2008

Layout, design and maps by Lisa Gutierrez. Text by Ursula Lemanski and Charles County Economic Development and Tourism. Photos by Charles County and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additional line graphics by Broderbund.



The Wild Side of the Potomac River

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
CHARLES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

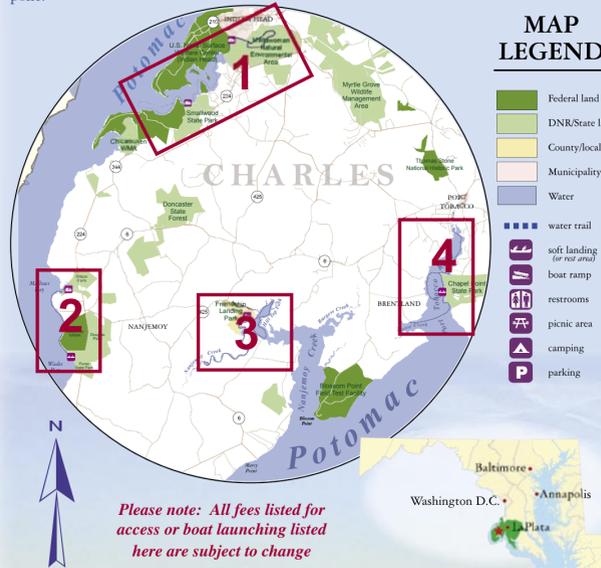
WATER TRAILS IN CHARLES COUNTY

Explore The Wild Side of the Potomac River

Charles County has paddling routes that range from short 1 to 2 hour trips, to all day excursions with overnight camping options. Miles of undeveloped shoreline offer unparalleled opportunities for fishing, bird and wildlife watching, and exploring the Lower Potomac and its tributaries.

Some of the routes are in sheltered areas with moderate wind and current conditions that provide ideal conditions for novices and families. Other routes, such as those along the mainstem of the Potomac River, are more exposed and offer more challenging opportunities for experienced paddlers.

Water trails in this area support the Potomac River Water Trail, which is a federally designated National Recreation Trail that spans from western Maryland to the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, a developing network of locally-managed trails that celebrate the heritage of the Potomac and upper Ohio River basins and offer a variety of recreational opportunities. For more information visit www.nps.gov/pohe.



Please note: All fees listed for access or boat launching listed here are subject to change



1 Mattawoman Creek Water Trail (Mattingly Park to the Potomac River)

There are many ways to explore the Mattawoman Creek trail. Launch from Mattingly Park and head north to the Mattawoman Natural Environment Area (NEA). The sheltered creek is good for paddlers of all levels, and the riparian forest habitat is excellent for bird-watching. Paddlers can also follow the creek south past the U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center to Smallwood State Park or continue on to the Potomac River. The distance from Mattingly Park, downstream to Smallwood State Park, is approximately 4.5 miles and from the Park to the mouth of the Potomac River is approximately 2.25 miles. Keep in mind that this area of the trail is open water, subject to winds and severe weather conditions, and is more suitable for experienced paddlers.

Access point at Mattingly Park

Managed by: The Town of Indian Head at 301-743-5511
 GPS Location: 38 35'24.78"N 77 9'38.43"W
 Description: Formerly known as Slavins Ramp, this facility is now operated by the Town of Indian Head and is a part of the adjacent park. This access point is located along deep water in Mattawoman Creek and is most often frequented by bass boaters and small boat owners. This area features a "no wake zone" for miles of protected paddling.
 Amenities: Boat ramp with pier, seasonal restrooms, picnic tables, fishing and trails
 Parking: Paved lot for 15 vehicles Fee: \$5 access fee (pay at ramp-side honor box)
 Directions: Follow Indian Head Highway/Route 210 South approximately 18 miles from the Capital Beltway (I-95). Turn left onto Mattingly Avenue. The ramp is located at the end of road.

Access point at Smallwood State Park/Sweden Point Marina

Managed by: Maryland Department of Natural Resources at 301-743-7613
 GPS Location: 38.33.52N 77.11.59W
 Description: The 628-acre park borders Mattawoman Creek less than a mile from its confluence with the Potomac River. The park is named after General William Smallwood, the fourth Governor of Maryland and a Revolutionary War officer. History enthusiasts will enjoy exploring the site of his home and surrounding area. The plantation home is open on Sundays with limited hours. This area features a variety of bird habitats from open tidal water and tidal wetlands to upland forests and fields. There are excellent opportunities to observe wildlife along nature trails, bridges, piers and the park roads.
 Amenities: The marina has accommodations for large boats with six boat ramps, a pier, restrooms, picnic area, campsites, fishing, trails, and seasonal concession stand. Small boat rentals are also available.
 Parking: Large paved lot for 140 vehicles
 Fee: \$10 for a daily boat ramp fee or \$60 for a seasonal pass; \$2 per person park service charge is collected on weekends and holidays, April through October.
 Directions: Route 225 south from Indian Head to right on Route 224 (Chicamuxen Road) at Mason Springs. Park is on right, 4 miles south of Mason Springs.

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST NEAR THIS TRAIL INCLUDE:

Indian Head
 In the 1890s, the Navy moved its proving ground to Indian Head from Annapolis. During WWI, funds were allocated to expand facilities, including the development of a base village with school, post office and houses around a village green. The town was incorporated in 1920. For more information visit www.townofindianhead.org.

Smallwood Retreat House
 Built around 1760, the plantation was the home of General William Smallwood until his death in 1792. General Smallwood was a noted Revolutionary War hero and served three 1-year terms as Governor of Maryland. The house was reconstructed and opened to the public in 1958. A newly constructed barn on the property houses exhibits of tobacco farming. For more information visit www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/smallwood/html.

Chicamuxen Wildlife Management Area
 This 381-acre property was the site of a Civil War encampment led by Union General Joseph Hooker. Today, it is a protected area with abundant waterfowl and forest interior birds. Bald eagles can often be seen, and many hiking trails allow visitors to explore the property. For more information visit www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/southern/chicamuxen.asp.

2 Lower Potomac River Water Trail (Purse State Park, the Potomac River and Mallows Bay)

This trail is part of the larger Lower Potomac River Water Trail, which runs from Washington, D.C., to Chesapeake Bay. Access points are few and far between here, but experienced paddlers and those who are unafraid of portage will be rewarded by the beautiful views and variety of habitats. Launch from Purse State Park and paddle up-river. The distance from Purse to Mallows Bay is approximately 3 miles.



The sunken ship graveyard in Mallows Bay can be seen by paddlers and also serves as habitat for marine creatures and other Potomac River wildlife.



Mallows Bay - (day use only)

Managed by: Charles County Parks Department at 301-932-3470
 GPS Location: 38.28.52N 77.15.813W
 Description: This access point is currently a paddle-in only, day-use area, with a small beach that is affected by tides. Charles County plans to enhance the site and open it to the public in the future. Contact the Charles County Parks Department for more information. Mallows Bay is the site of one of the largest "sunken ship graveyards" in North America, with vessels dating from the period of the American Revolution. The ship graveyard is home to 235 wooden ships of the U.S. Shipping Board Emergency Fleet, intended to carry troops and supplies to Europe during World War I. Many have literally become islands, with their own mini-ecosystems, converting the bay into one of the most unique natural areas of the state.

State and national officials are interested in making Mallows Bay a shipwreck preserve. By law, the state owns any historic artifacts in tidal waters.
 Proposed amenities: (opening planned for Spring 2009) Boat launch with pier, portable toilet, trails, fishing and parking.
 Directions: Mallows Bay is a one-mile long cove, located on the Potomac River shoreline in western Charles County, about 2 miles up river from Purse State Park. The cove can only be reached by small boat. The trip, to and from Purse State Park, requires traversing a significant distance in open water that is subject to wind and waves. This should only be attempted by experienced paddlers.

Nanjemoy NRMA - (day use only)

Managed by: U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
 Description: This 1900-acre site is contiguous to Purse State Park and Maryland Route 224. It has been labeled one of the most ecologically and culturally significant landscapes in Maryland and features 1.2 miles of undeveloped shoreline. Migratory waterfowl, wading birds and bald eagles are common sights. BLM allows beach access and day-use along the shoreline, which makes it an ideal resting spot for paddlers. Driftwood from the river often collects along this area so use caution when landing and exploring. Climb the bluff near the beach to see beautiful views of the river and Virginia shoreline.
 Amenities: Beach access, trails, picnic area and wildlife viewing
 Parking: Small gravel lot along Rt. 224 Fee: None
 Directions: Route 225 south from Indian Head to right on Route 224 (Chicamuxen Road) at Mason Springs. Continue for approximately 12 miles. Parking area is on the right (west side of Route 224).

Access point at Purse State Park

Managed by: Maryland Department of Natural Resources at 301-743-7613
 GPS Location: 38.23.27N 77.18.56W
 Description: A 1/4-mile portage along a wooded, natural surface trail is necessary to access the put-in point here. Visitors should check tides before visiting, as high tide offers very little beach area. The park is a 90-acre reserve located on Wades Bay, off the Potomac River. The park is an excellent place for wildlife viewing and has high quality forest and marshlands and pools surrounded by moss-covered rock walls. Eagles, ospreys and great blue herons can be seen here. Forest interior nesting birds such as acadian flycatchers, wood thrushes, northern parula warblers, ovenbirds, hooded warblers, scarlet tanagers and the uncommon worm-eating warbler have been seen in the park and at other nearby places along Rt. 224.
 Amenities: Fishing, trails, fossil hunting
 Parking: Small gravel lot on Rt. 224, for approximately 8 vehicles Fee: None

Directions: Route 225 south from Indian Head to right on Route 224 (Chicamuxen Road) at Mason Springs. Continue for approximately 12 miles. Parking lot is on left (east side of Route 224), 1.8 miles south of Liverpool Point Road.

3 Friendship Farm Park Water Trail (Nanjemoy Creek, Hilltop Fork and Church Creek)

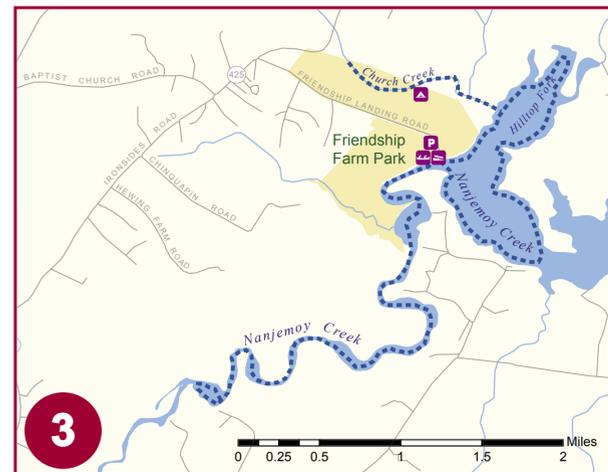
This trail is ideal for paddlers of all skill levels and provides options for either leisurely or more challenging paddling experiences. The area features miles of scenic marshes abundant with wildlife, marsh plants and flowers, and several species of dragonflies. The high banks along winding Nanjemoy Creek offer protection from strong winds and also serve as nesting sites for bald eagles. Routes along Hilltop Fork and Church Creek are ideal for less experienced paddlers. Those seeking a more challenging experience can reach the open waters of the Potomac River just a few miles away.



Friendship Farm Park

Access point at Friendship Farm Park and Landing

Managed by: Charles County Parks Department at 301-932-3470
 GPS Location: 38.27.24N 77.09.048W
 Description: This scenic park overlooks Nanjemoy Creek and offers a variety of recreational activities. A 235-acre nature trail system provides two observation towers for birding enthusiasts. The site is located in a protected cove just four miles from the Potomac River. The ramp and dock area are designated as a "Free Fishing Zone," meaning that no fishing license is required.
 Amenities: Boat ramp and fishing pier, primitive campsite, restrooms, picnic area, ballfields, hiking trails and wildlife viewing.
 Parking: Paved lot for 14 vehicles. Handicap accessible Fee: None
 Directions: Take Route 6 (Port Tobacco Road) west from La Plata, to Durham Church Road. Turn left and continue; becomes Rt.425 Ironsides Road. Turn left onto Friendship Landing Road, which ends at the boat ramp.



4 Port Tobacco River Trail (Port Tobacco, Chapel Point and Goose Creek)

This trail is remote but very scenic. The quiet and secluded shoreline of Chapel Point State Park is ideal for canoes and kayaks but is not recommended for larger trailer or motorized boats. Those wanting a longer or more challenging paddling experience can start from the launch point at the State Park and travel north up the beautiful and historic Port Tobacco River or explore the southern reaches which include Goose Creek. The distance from Port Tobacco to the Chapel Point launch is approximately 2.5 miles. The distance from Chapel Point to the mouth of Goose Creek is also approximately 2.5 miles.

Access point at Chapel Point State Park

Managed by: Maryland Department of Natural Resources at 301-743-7613
 GPS Location: 38.28.14N 77.01.55W
 Description: This 828-acre undeveloped multi-use park is located on the Port Tobacco River, a tributary of the Potomac River, and offers a rich diversity of forest, field, and tidal wetland habitats. Four permanent waterfowl blinds are available on the Port Tobacco River for observation



Paddlers enjoying the sheltered beauty of Nanjemoy Creek

or hunting use. The area has a small sand and gravel launch area that is suitable for small boats, canoes and kayaks. At high tide there is almost no beach, so consult tide charts before visiting. The waterfront offers excellent fishing (Maryland Bay Sport Tidal License is required).
 Amenities: Restrooms, picnic area, fishing, trails and a primitive paddle-in campsite (available by permit only).
 Parking: Small gravel lot Fee: None
 Directions: Chapel Point is located 5 miles south of La Plata. Take Route 301 south to Chapel Point Road. Follow Chapel Point Road west for approximately 2.3 miles to the park entrance, and follow signs to ramp.



St. Ignatius Church Charles County

Access Point at Port Tobacco Marina

Managed by: Port Tobacco Marina at 301-932-0062
 Description: This privately-operated marina, located in the quiet headwaters of the Port Tobacco River, is truly one of Charles County's best-kept secrets, geared for all kinds of boaters, with an emphasis on the entire family. This facility can get very busy on weekends during the boating season so plan accordingly.
 Amenities: Full service boatel, Mercruiser service, RV hook ups, camp sites, fuel, restaurant and three launch ramps that can be accessed between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. A rental service offering paddle boats and row boats is also available.
 Parking: Large lot can accommodate many boaters
 Fee: Ramps Daily users pay \$6 during the week and \$7 on weekends.
 Directions: Take Rte. 301 to the Town of La Plata, Maryland. Proceed west on Rt. 6 (Port Tobacco Road) to Shirley Blvd. and follow the signs to the marina.

Access Point at Goose Creek Bay Marina

Managed by: Goose Bay Marina and Campground at 301-934-3812
 Description: Goose Bay is a privately-operated marina and campground located on the Port Tobacco River at the confluence with the Potomac River. It is located in a sheltered bay and has three concrete ramps for launching boats. This facility is also very busy on weekends during the boating season.
 Amenities: Full-service marine facility with fuel and repairs available, as well as a ships store and restroom facilities
 Parking: Large lot can accommodate many boaters Fee: Launching fee is \$7 and there is a \$3 parking fee if you wish to park an additional vehicle.
 Directions: Take Rte. 6 West from La Plata and follow for approximately 7 miles. Turn left onto Blossom Point Road and follow the signs. For more information visit the Goose Creek website at www.goosebaymarina.com.

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST NEAR THIS TRAIL INCLUDE:

Port Tobacco Historic District
 Port Tobacco is one of the oldest communities on the East Coast. Prior to being colonized by the English in 1634, the site was home to the Indian settlement, "Potopaco." During the late 1600s, Port Tobacco became a major seaport, and later the county seat. Visitors to the area can tour the reconstructed Port Tobacco Courthouse, the restored One Room Schoolhouse built in 1876, and the Thomas Stone National Historic Site - a plantation home that belonged to one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

St. Ignatius Church
 This church was founded by Catholic settlers in 1641 and is the nation's oldest active parish. The manor house and church have served as residence for priests at Chapel Point for more than 300 years. Chapel Point Road is part of the Religious Freedom Byway.

