

Mathews Maritime Heritage Trail Meeting
Active Lifestyle Center, Mathews, Virginia
March 30, 2009, 1:00 – 3:00pm

Meeting Goals

1. Discuss the benefits of MMHT to partner organizations.
2. Share updates and status reports of tasks underway by committee members.
3. Discuss priority water trail development tasks including development of a map display that can be used for promotional activities and upcoming events.

Participants

Janet Loyd, Coordinator MMHT Project Management Team

Dave Montgomery, MMHT Project Team

Marcy Benouameur, MMHT Project Team, Blueways Water Trail Co Chair

Marcia Berman, Comprehensive Coastal Planning Program, VIMS

Jack Caldwell, Mathews Historical Society, Mathews Maritime Foundation member

Nancy Roche, VA Cooperative Extension Service

Becky Barnhardt, Mathews Memorial Library

Rebecca Grow, MCVIC

Ursula Lemanski, NPS, Rivers and Trails Program

Welcome and Introductions

Janet provided an overview of the project including background, work to-date, and primary goals. New members were welcomed: Jack Caldwell, Mathews Historical Society and MMF, Rebecca Grow Mathews County Visitor and Information Center

Benefits to Partners Organizations

Nancy briefed the committee on the “Logic Model” as a tool for program development and evaluation. Each organization can use the model to determine how their actions can benefit the overall goals of the groups as well as accomplish their specific missions. As a first step the committee discussed how the MMHT initiative would benefit their organization. Results are as follows:

1. Encourages involvement of younger people to appreciate Mathew’s heritage by getting them on the water.
2. Provides fun and enjoyment that enrich the lives of citizens.
3. Documents and shares history and heritage; show them the significance of what is here.
4. MMHT expands upon and embellishes the original blueway concept.
5. Increases stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and Mathews water resources.
6. Increases water access; very limited on the East River.
7. Expands marketing opportunities; provides additional experiences to offer as part of package of tourism venues for the county.
8. Provides additional information on natural resources, native plants, birding sites along the water trails.
9. Provides educational opportunity; get kids on the water, to supplement book learning; could support school SOLs in science, math, history, and other classes.
10. Brings more people to the county.

11. Increases interest in history which may lead to more donations to the library that could be archived for future generations; the library can provide support with research and a repository of materials.
12. Provides partnership to supplement summer enrichment program with lecture series.
13. VIMS can provide technical support and resource, GIS mapping assistance; NOAA Sea Grant Advisory Program (coordinated through VIMS has modules available for K-12 activities; National Estuary Environmental Research Programs (NEERS) provides research and studies marine environments and conditions, but also takes kids out on kayak trips to study the natural environment in the field
14. Also supports larger initiatives to document and celebrate history of the region such as the John Smith Chesapeake National Historical Trail, and Chesapeake Bay Gateways Program.

Benefits: Conservation, Tourism, Education, Recreation, Health and Fitness

Water Trail Access

Ursula reported that the site visit of potential launch sites will held on March 31, 2009, 8:30-11:00am. Participants will include DGIF, and committee members including: Middle Peninsula Access Authority, Mathews County Planning and Zoning, MMF, and Mathews Blueways. The purpose of the tour is to assess opportunities for access at: East River Boatyard, Phillipot's Wharf, Hick's Wharf, Williams Wharf, Town Point Landing, and private property on Mobjack Peninsula.

Issues related to liability have been a concern of landowners that may otherwise be interested in allowing access. [During the site tour on 3/31/09, the committee asked Steve Kesler, DGIF for an interpretation of the landowner liability statute. Steve stated that a lawsuit could not be field against a landowner allowing recreational access (if they were in compliance with the statute); it went to the state's attorney general's office first.] At the last meeting Steve Whiteway suggested a possible Public Access Summit for county residents; this would be a great venue to explain the process and answer questions regarding liability as well as other legal issues related to public access, conservation easements, and tax benefits.

A copy of the Mathews County Water Access Study has been received from Matt. The study provides good information on the 20 existing landings (most are 20' VDOT right-of-way that ended at the shoreline). In addition to assessing needed improvements at existing sites, there is interest in expanding the study to review additional VDOT right-of-way on East River to determine if there are opportunities for new access points

Water Trail Exhibit and Marketing

The committee discussed three inter-related products that would be used for outreach and promotion, and to serve as a central clearing-house for the MMHT:

1. Exhibit Display (short-term, immediate need): This product would include a map and graphics portraying past and current views of maritime heritage sites including wharves, historic homes, tide mills, etc. The exhibit would be used for community events and outreach to expand awareness of the project and engage citizens in development of the trail.
2. Information Kiosk (long-term tourism project): This project would provide point-of contact information to tourists visiting Mathews, via an interactive kiosk. Rebecca reported that she has been in contact with MultiMedia, the company that has designed the kiosk in DCR State

Parks, and is pursuing funding options for a kiosk at MCVIC. The kiosk would provide information on MMHT, water trails, as well as other tourist destinations, and visitor services.

3. Project Website: The group discussed various options for development of a project webpage that could be linked to Mathew Blueways and the county websites. This product would provide additional detailed information on the history and heritage of Mathews maritime resources, links to partners websites, and could be used by those from outside the area to research water trail and heritage tourism opportunities.

All three of the products above will require the development of a water trail map/guide, i.e. a GIS base map that graphically shows the location of access sites and points of interest. Marcia passed out a draft framework consisting of a legend page of the entire East River, broken down into 13 tiles. Each tile was then “blown-up” to a full page to show features at a higher resolution. The blown-up tiles could be printed as a pdf. Dave has begun collecting historic and current photos of the wharves on the East River. Ideally the data points would be geo-referenced in a GIS system so that you could click on a site and an attribute table would show a listing of site features. This could serve as the foundation for a simple table-top exhibit/display, as well as the more polished “Kiosk Project” underway by MCVIC.

Marcia offered to develop a draft product for the exhibit including a “poster” with a map, text, and graphics. The first community event that MMHT will display the exhibit will be on May 2nd (Northern Virginia Regatta). Dave will provide photos; Ursula and Janet will provide a project overview including goals and partners. Marcia will be out of town from April, 17-27th and requested that committee members review the base map and get back to her with revisions in 2 weeks so she would have time to make the needed changes. A “Exhibit Work Group” was organized (Dave, Janet, Marcia, Marcy) who will meet on April 29th to review a draft product.

The need to identify a permanent location for the project database, map files, and supplemental information was discussed. The committee thought that the county would be the best repository of this information (no one from the county was present to respond).

Planning and Policy Updates: no report

Events and Programs

Mathews High School Regatta, May 2, 2009: Williams Wharf with Northern Virginia participants

Tour de Chesapeake Bike Ride, will be held on May 15-17, 2009. Ursula will be working at the event, and will find out if the exhibit/display for MMHT can be set up at the registration area and/or hospitality tent.

National Trails Day “East River Rally” will be held on June 6, 2009 (also Chesapeake Bay “Save the Bay” Day). Janet has registered the event on the national website (sponsored by the American Hiking Society). Williams Wharf has agreed to allow kayaks to launch from their site. There was discussion on incorporating a service project with the scouts, or possible the Mathews Mudrunners,

a local AVT club that has expressed interest in supporting beach clean-up efforts. Nancy will follow-up with her contacts.

Kids Kayak Camp: Janet, Nancy, and Marcy provided an overview of the “Kids Kayak Camp” program to be held at the East River Boat Yard on July 27-30, 2009, and August 10-14, 2009. The program will allow 20 youth in the community to participate in a 4-day camp that integrated kayak skill building, with educational activities to increase environmental stewardship and awareness of local maritime heritage. Mathews 4-H will provide 2 days of educational activities, and Bay Trail Outfitters will provide 2 days on on-water kayak instructions. The program will be promoted through the middle schools. Other suggestions were made including flyers in the library and other community facilities, as well as connecting with pastors at local churches to promote the camp.

Task/Assignments:

Project Exhibit/Base Map

1. Marcia will set up a website for committee members to view base maps.
2. Committee members: review draft maps and send comments to Marcia by April 10th.
3. Dave provide photos of wharf sites.
4. Ursula and Janet will provide “project overview” text.
5. Janet and Dave will convene Exhibit Work Group meeting in 4/29/09 at 1:00pm.

Kiosk

1. Ursula and Rebecca will follow-up with Chesapeake Bay Gateways Program (grant application deadline April 17th).
2. Rebecca will follow-up with VTC Marketing Leverage Program.

Events/Program:

1. Kids Kayak Camp: Marcy will continue to coordinate outreach, marketing, program development, and logistics with Bay Trail Outfitters and Mathews 4-H.
2. Tour de Chesapeake: Ursula will secure approvals from BikeWalk Virginia for display of MMHT exhibit at the event.
3. National Trail Days: Dave will serve as point-of-contact; Nancy will investigate potential service project with local ATC club.
4. Anyone interested in participating in the above events should contact Dave.

Ursula and Janet will be sending out a meeting summary and revised matrix of committee contacts. The next full meeting of the MMHT Committee will be on **Tuesday, May 26, 2009 1:00pm**; the Exhibit Work Group will be meeting on Wednesday, April 29th at 1:00pm.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.