

INTERPRETING THE BYWAY

Through consultation with partners throughout Maryland's Eastern Shore, a consensus has developed that the identity of the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway should be extended southward to include the Michener's and Blue Crab byway initiatives. This common identity will help unify the Eastern Shore's marketing and presentation of its visitor experience while allowing ample opportunity for variation based upon unique local and regional differences. Interpretively, this approach allows the byway and its communities and attractions to build upon well-established existing initiatives while creating new experiences for visitors to explore.

The Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway was established in 2002 and extends from the City of Chesapeake on the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal south to Kent Island and the Bay Bridge. Sidetracks explore scenic back-country routes, connecting to out-of-the-way destinations. The byway is a partnership of Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties.

The proposed southern extension of the Chesapeake Country byway would extend the main spine of the existing Chesapeake Country NSB southward from Centreville along Maryland Route 213 in Queen Anne's County to Maryland 662, at Wye Mills, featuring the Wye Grist Mill at the Queen Anne's/Talbot County line. The main spine of the extended byway, focusing on maritime heritage, will follow a series of routes connecting Easton, Trappe, Cambridge, Bestpitch, and Vienna before crossing the Nanticoke River and connecting to the Blue Crab portion of the byway in Wicomico County. An agricultural heritage route will connect the byway to Denton, Federalsburg, and back to Vienna. The draft marketing strategy (discussed at AC #4) suggests that the Michener portion of the byway be identified and marketed as the *Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway: Exploring Michener's Chesapeake*.

In planning for interpretation and marketing, it is important that the existing investments and initiatives established by the Chesapeake Country NSB Alliance serve as a foundation for the interpretive and marketing presentation of the extended byway. The programs and materials related to the existing Chesapeake Country NSB in Queen Anne's, Kent, and Cecil Counties have now been in place for several years. In addition, however, programs of the three regional state heritage areas, the Blue Crab byway initiative, the Chesapeake Gateways program, and existing promotional initiatives in the mid-shore region of Talbot, Dorchester, and Caroline Counties should be also be respected and adapted for use along the extended byway.

This chapter suggests how these different but related programs may be brought together thematically under a single interpretive identity and how the *Michener's Chesapeake* region of the byway can adapt its existing interpretive presentation as a distinct set of related experiences within that identity.

1.1 Guiding Principles for Interpretation

James A. Michener's 1978 historical novel *Chesapeake* is set in a fictionalized landscape of the lower Choptank River. Through the lives of his characters, Michener evokes the character of the Chesapeake Bay landscape and the evolving cultures it sustained over a four century period of settlement. The central portion of the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway is inspired by Michener's novel and similarly seeks to evoke the character of the landscape through the lives of

those who have lived there. Interpretation of the *Michener's Chesapeake* portion of the byway will be based upon the following guiding principles.

- **Evoking Character:** Interpretation will be used to evoke the character of the Chesapeake landscape to visitors through the stories of its places and its peoples.
- **Clear Communication:** Visitors will be presented with clear, accurate information about the visitor experience available both at individual sites and along the byway as a whole. They will be provided with what they need to know to have a pleasant experience including directions, information on programming, services available, accessibility, timeframes, and precautions they should take, if any.
- **Exploration:** Interpretation provides a reason for visitors to explore the . The Chesapeake Bay landscape is the experience, the byway is the means through which the landscape is explored, and interpretive attractions and installations provide destinations that encourage travel and make it worthwhile.
- **Authenticity:** Authentic landscapes, communities, and resources will be means through which interpretation is presented. Stories will be told in the actual locations to which they relate, wherever possible.
- **Quality:** Chesapeake Country will be known for the high quality of its interpretation and visitor experience. Partners will work together to establish and maintain guidelines for consistent high levels of quality.
- **Accuracy:** Interpretive content will be well-researched and accurate.
- **Different Styles of Learning:** Interpretive media and techniques will be designed to acknowledge different learning styles and generational differences in how information is absorbed. Interpretive content will be conveyed in a manner that is understandable to visitors.
- **Experiential:** Interpretation will be experiential as much as possible. Communication that is visual and tied to authentic landscape features will be emphasized over text. The opportunity to actively do things will be preferred over the mere providing of information. Visitors will be encouraged to experience the Chesapeake landscape through their senses.
- **Fun and Rewarding:** The interpretive experience will be interesting and fun. Visitors will find the experience rewarding and will be encouraged to engage further and to return.
- **Significance and Understanding:** Interpretation will convey the intricacies and dynamics of the Chesapeake Bay landscape and an understanding of its ecological significance. Why this place is important to us today will be made apparent.

- **Stewardship:** The need for stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay's ecology and natural resources will underlie the interpretive presentation. Opportunities to support and become involved in stewardship of the Bay and its resources will be offered.

1.2 Chesapeake Country Audiences

Maryland's Eastern Shore is an active and desirable destination for visitors. Its proximity to the extensive metropolitan areas of Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia make it accessible to a large number of people, yet its separation by the Chesapeake Bay has set it on a separate developmental track that has preserved its unique natural, maritime, and rural agricultural character. A visit to the Eastern Shore is an easy escape to a place that is beautiful, peaceful, and different. Tourism is an important part of the Eastern Shore's economy. The goal of the byway is to strengthen the Eastern Shore's visitor experience and make it more coherent, thereby expanding the range of desirable things to see and do on the Eastern Shore for both visitors and residents.

In planning for interpretation, it is helpful to consider the types of audiences that visit the Eastern Shore and how they will be using the byway. The scenic byway is envisioned as a means through which the Eastern Shore landscape can be explored. It links communities and attractions and provides things to do along the way. Through observation and information from existing attractions and tourism organizations within the Eastern Shore, several types of audiences have been identified below for consideration (also see Maryland Byways Market Research). Each type of potential audience has different interests, expectations, and needs with respect to interpretation and visitor services. It is helpful for the byway partners to consider these varied audience expectations and needs when developing plans for programming and marketing.

Heritage Travelers

Heritage travelers are the common demographic group to which scenic byways, heritage areas, historic communities, and many historic sites appeal. Heritage travelers are older, affluent, and well-educated. They tend to travel by automobile in small groups: as couples, pairs of couples, or small groups of family and friends. Heritage travelers are interested in and engaged with the places they visit. They are looking for a high-quality experience. They are capable of absorbing detailed interpretive information, and they are interested in understanding the broader implications of the information presented (see [handout](#) from Advisory Committee Meeting #4).

Authenticity is a key attraction to heritage travelers. They want to see, experience, and appreciate the actual places where things happened. Quality-of-life is of particular interest. Heritage travelers are interested in a holistic experience, not just visiting attractions. They want to be in interesting places, and they want to experience the places that local residents frequent. Heritage travelers are interested in the quality of the experience: the driving (or bicycling), the scenery, the lodging, dining, and shopping. Heritage travelers are willing to spend more money than other types of visitors. They tend to be repeat visitors if they like the place and feel there is more to see and do.

Flexibility is important in planning itineraries. A range of short, medium, and longer experiences should be available. Discovery of the unexpected while they are here will encourage visitors to adjust their plans as well as visit again. Interpretation should not only be of high quality, but should be intellectually stimulating and enlightening.

Active Retirees and Part-time Residents

Chesapeake Country is a desirable location as a place to which older individuals and couples can retire or own a second home. Its high quality of life and relaxing character make it an appealing place to be, yet it is easily accessible to friends, family, and urban experiences of the metropolitan areas to the west of the bay.

Active retirees and part-time residents value the character of their communities. Active retirees are likely to become involved as volunteers and benefactors. They may be among the area's strongest proponents in presenting and representing it to visitors. Active retirees and part-time residents share many of the attributes of heritage travelers and may indeed *be* heritage travelers, their primary difference being the length and frequency of their stay. Active retirees will host friends and family who come for visits. They are likely to use the byway as a means to show their friends around and introduce them to the Eastern Shore. The quality of interpretive presentations should be such that they will engage and sustain their interest, providing them with an understanding of and appreciation for the Eastern Shore that they can share and convey with friends.

Recreational Boaters

The Chesapeake Bay is a playground for recreational boaters. Marinas are found along the waterways leading to the bay and are an important component of the regional economy. Boaters descend upon the Eastern Shore during the spring, summer, and fall seasons and experience an alternative lifestyle on the water. They motor and sail the bay exploring the coastline, rivers, and inlets and stopping at waterside communities for provisions and landside activities.

The byway will be an ancillary resource for boaters. It will be an additional landside activity that can be enjoyed when automobiles or bicycles are available. Its presentation of the natural history and heritage of the Eastern Shore will reinforce the Chesapeake experience they enjoy. Like other part-time residents, boaters are likely to be affluent and to deeply appreciate Chesapeake communities and landscapes. They will introduce their friends and guests to the Eastern Shore. Marinas and launching areas are potential locations for self-guided interpretive exhibits. Interpretive experiences within close proximity of marinas and docking facilities, such as attractions, exhibits, and walking tours in waterside communities, will be of particular interest.

Nature and "Human-powered" Recreational Enthusiasts

Michener's Chesapeake Country region has an extensive natural landscape of extraordinary ecological significance. Nature and recreational enthusiasts are drawn to this landscape to explore its riches, whether for relatively passive activities such as bird watching and fishing, or more active recreational pursuits such as kayaking and biking. Regional tourism organizations market to nature and recreational enthusiasts as part of their promotional strategies. Bicycling is a very popular activity throughout the Eastern Shore because of the relative flatness of the terrain and the relatively high density of points of interest along the way.

The byway provides access to many of the natural areas within the three-county Michener region. These natural areas are part of the scenic landscape being presented, especially in the Blackwater Refuge vicinity. Parking areas and boat launches are places where interpretive exhibits can be installed, supporting the interests of nature enthusiasts and inviting others to appreciate and take part. Many of these areas already host interpretive exhibits that show water trail and other opportunities.

Weekend Explorers

The proximity of the Eastern Shore to the metropolitan areas west of the bay results in many short, exploratory trips being undertaken by individuals and couples looking for a quick, casual getaway. The Chesapeake Country region is the perfect place for such a quick change of pace. Weekend explorers are short-term, often first-time visitors looking to get away. The scenic byway provides a structure through which they can explore the region, providing links to destinations, and offering interpretive content that promotes the understanding and appreciation of the landscape. Through this appreciation, it is expected that repeat visits and longer stays will occur.

Families

The Eastern Shore is a potential vacation destination for families whether for travel or for stay at a rental property. Families are a primary audience for the Eastern Shore's visitor attractions. As a visitor group, families imply a mix of ages, from children to grandparents. In order to attract and satisfy families, a mix of activities and options is required — something for everyone. Different interests, abilities, and activity levels need to be engaged and accommodated. Family groups may divide up, do different things, and meet back together.

Families tend to have limited time periods for their visits. They require visitor services, such as rest rooms, places for older people to rest, friendly guides, and snacks, if possible. Families are looking for fun and enjoyment is more often the primary driver in decision-making, rather than the educational value, although education is important. They benefit from quick, easy learning. To serve families, the byway should emphasize linking places that involve activities and experiences that are engaging and fun. Sailing ships, skipjacks, working waterfronts, nature trails, and the region's more comprehensive attractions will interest family groups.

Destination Travelers

The primary weekend traffic along US Route 50 during the summer months are visitors that are heading to the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia beaches. They are often not that interested in stopping along the way, but even capturing a small percentage of these travelers would be a benefit to all the Eastern Shore communities. Opportunities for things to see and do on bad weather days, or for those that want to do something after leaving the beach on the traditional Saturday moving in/moving out period to extend their visit is worth recognizing.

1.3 Chesapeake Country Thematic Structure

Interpretive themes are the central concepts or ideas that are important about a place, subject or resource and that give it meaning and significance. Themes help visitors connect individual places and stories with broader contexts and help them understand what they mean and why they matter.

Themes for the byway must be broad and comprehensive enough to represent the character and significance of the entire region, yet specific enough to provide context, focus, and meaning for a wide variety of individual stories and places. Every community and site within the heritage area must be able to identify with them. Local stories, subjects, and resources will be used to illustrate regional themes. Themes establish a clear, regional framework for presentation and are used to guide and coordinate interpretation at individual sites. They help link communities, attractions,

and sites together to provide a comprehensive, cohesive, and understandable experience for visitors.

As discussed in other portions of the corridor management plan, Maryland's Eastern Shore has seven Chesapeake-related interpretive initiatives, each with its own thematic structure. They include:

- Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network – encompassing the entire Chesapeake Bay Watershed;
- Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area – Queen Anne's, Kent, Talbot, and Caroline Counties;
- Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area – Dorchester County;
- Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway – Queen Anne's, Kent, and Cecil Counties;
- Michener's Chesapeake Scenic Byway – Talbot, Dorchester, and Caroline Counties;
- Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area – Wicomico, Somerset, and Worcester Counties;
- Blue Crab Scenic Byway – Wicomico, Somerset; and Worcester Counties.

In addition, the Eastern Shore features the:

- Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, an All-American Road – Dorchester and Caroline Counties; and
- Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail – entire Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
- Beach to Bay Indian Trail, a National Recreation Trail from Ocean City to Crisfield

These overlapping initiatives all explore similar themes related to Chesapeake Bay landscapes and heritage, though the themes are expressed in different ways. The recommendation to combine the Chesapeake Country, Michener, and Blue Crab byway initiatives under a single identity and presentation is intended to eliminate the potential confusion that could be felt by visitors and replace it with a clear and comprehensive vision, message, and experience. To do so, consensus must be reached on a single set of overarching themes within which local variations and interests can be expressed.

Overview of Existing Themes, Stories and Marketing Messages

Below is a summary of the existing themes, storyline topics, and marketing messages developed for the heritage area and byway initiatives within the Chesapeake Country byway's regions.

Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area

Central Story:

Living with an Estuary – An Inseparable Influence

Life here is inseparable from the Chesapeake Bay – as estuary and as watershed. This is true today as it has been historically.

Six Singular Regional Stories:

Story 1: Changes in the Land

The Chesapeake Bay is a dynamic natural system with humans as an integral part.

Story 2: Peopling the Land: Change and Continuity

Residents here, past and present, have selectively embraced change in response to the particular resources and geography of Chesapeake Bay, and in the process, have themselves changed this place.

Story 3: Colony and Nation-building

This region both participated in and contributed to processes and events central to the growth and continued prosperity of colonial Maryland. With time, the region also contributed to the broader patterns of nation-building.

Story 4: Food for the Soul – Religion and Belief

The history of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area is closely interwoven with the story of religious toleration and denominational development spanning the 17th to the 20th centuries. The religious heritage here in turn is linked in powerful ways to Abolition and the Underground Railroad.

Story 5: Working the Land and Water

The fertile lands, rich waters, and gentle climate of this region supported successive populations whose wealth grew as they learned to exploit these resources. Today's economy and unique Chesapeake Bay cultures still rely on a foundation built from natural resources, and resonate also to influences well beyond the Bay.

Story 6: Destination Eastern Shore! Travel and Transportation Past and Present

If this is a landscape whose destiny is determined by the Chesapeake Bay, it is also a landscape shaped by the history of transportation and the ever-greater access afforded by a succession of travel modes.

Supporting Stories:

Supporting Story A: Inspired by the Bay – Cultural and Artistic Expression

Cultural and artistic expression, historic and contemporary, not only enriches the fabric of life in the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, it also illuminates the variety of influences, human and natural, that shaped local societies. This story focuses on the many examples of artistic and creative expression that are sown into the fabric of life on the Eastern Shore. As varied as the area's residents, the region's cultural expression ranges from fine art and photography to literature and poetry to traditional arts and crafts.

Supporting Story B: Building by the Bay – Architecture and Landscapes

Landscapes and architecture throughout the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area not only reflect the influence of the Chesapeake Bay estuary, they reveal the area's origins and patterns of human settlement, illustrate its history of adaptation, and reflect its creative artistic expression.

Supporting Story C: Recreation and Renewal by the Bay

Forms of recreation abound in the Story of the Chesapeake Heritage Area, attracted by the abundant water access and even more abundant wildlife. The changing forms and conditions of this recreation illuminate an important dimension of life within the region.

The Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area has produced marketing materials that use tag lines and messaging derived from its themes. These include:

Living by the Bay – (the region's peoples, past and present)

Working the Water – (the Chesapeake's maritime heritage)

Working the Land – (the Eastern Shore's agricultural landscape)

Inspired by the Bay – (culture and artistic expression)
Playing by the Bay – (recreation and renewal)
Building by the Bay – (historic communities, crossroads villages, and rural landscapes)
Food for the Soul – (Colonial history and early religious pluralism)

Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway

An interpretive plan prepared for the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway in 2005 adopted the thematic structure developed for Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area. In its current marketing materials, including its website, brochure, and map, Chesapeake Country organizes its attractions through the following three messages:

WATER – The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries reveal the tapestry that is Chesapeake Country

LAND – Agriculture and pristine natural resource areas accentuate our rural character

HISTORY – Historic buildings, churches, and landscapes are evidence of our rich Colonial history.

These marketing messages reflect the Stories of the Chesapeake themes but do not specifically delineate them. Communities and attractions are presented individually under the three categories without overarching interpretive content.

Chesapeake Country also outlines a series of itineraries that reflect the tag lines created by Stories of the Chesapeake. Presented in this order, they include:

Birding the Byway

Chesapeake Country's Bountiful Harvest: Working the Water

Food for the Soul: Historic Churches

Chesapeake Country's Bountiful Harvest: Working the Land

Finally, Chesapeake Country makes a special effort of marketing its agricultural character through both its website and an independent brochure and map. These materials use the tag lines:

Living on the Land, and

Chesapeake Country is Farm Country.

The agricultural marketing materials feature a map identifying agricultural attractions along the byway and they present an interpretive overview of the following subjects:

Crops: Why so much corn? Vineyards on the Eastern Shore? What is hay anyway?

Livestock: What's the difference between brown cows and black-and-white cows?

What is a broiler? How much milk does one cow produce?

Machines: Aren't they all tractors? What is a combine? How do the corn kernels get off the cob? What are all those metal buildings?

Seasons: Although it may not always be obvious, every season is a farm season.

Heart of Chesapeake Country Heritage Area

Seven primary interpretive topics were identified for interpretation of the heritage area in its 2002 management plan and were further developed for its website:

Agricultural Life

Chesapeake Landscapes & Outdoor Adventure

Dorchester Families & Traditions
Harriet Tubman and the Eastern Shore African American History
History, Architecture, and Artifacts
Maritime Life
Native American Heritage

Heart of Chesapeake Country has also produced a trail guide brochure titled, *Birding in the Heart of Chesapeake Country* with interpretive information on birding and the delineation of recommended birding trails and locations for observation.

Other Mid-Shore Promotion Efforts

The Mid-Shore Regional Council, a cooperative regional planning and development agency within Caroline, Dorchester and Talbot Counties, has created the *Mid-Shore Directory of Food, Farms, and Fun* that outlines 'where to find locally grown and raised produce, plants, seafood, horse farms, wineries, and more throughout Caroline, Dorchester & Talbot Counties.' The brochure coincides with the area covered by the Michener byway initiative. It lists sixty-six agricultural attractions under the topics of:

Bed & Breakfast
Horse Farms
Agritourism
Farmers Markets
Winery
Nursery
Produce
Meat & Dairy

Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area

The 2002 management plan for the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area identifies six thematic topics and stories related to them:

1. A Water World: The Living, Natural Bays and Rivers of the Chesapeake and the Atlantic
2. Great Escapes: Recreation and Renewal
3. Land, Water, and Action: Stewardship and Sustainability
4. The Land of Plenty: Peoples and Settlement on the Lower Eastern Shore
5. Lifelines and Livelihoods: Commerce, Productivity, and Transportation
6. Military and Naval Heritage on the Lower Eastern Shore

Overarching Chesapeake Country Byway Interpretive Themes

It is recommended that representatives of the existing Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway and their partners from the Michener and Blue Crab byway regions, work together with the three Eastern Shore heritage areas to achieve consensus on a set of overarching interpretive themes for presentation of Maryland's Eastern Shore. This effort should simply select the common set of overarching themes (adapted from already utilized interpretive and marketing messages) to be communicated through byway interpretation and marketing for all of Maryland's Eastern Shore byways. In particular, agreement should be reached on the use of tag lines as marketing messages by region. The goal is to craft overarching messages that will be clear and understandable to visitors throughout the Eastern Shore and beyond while accommodating local variations and distinctions that reinforce the unique character and presentation of local communities, attractions, and sites.

Using this approach each region can then be left to further develop their identity while working cooperatively on communicating those messages to the traveling public. The two heritage areas (Stories of the Chesapeake and Heart of the Chesapeake) and four County-based tourism offices that comprise Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway can continue to work together to expand the available itineraries and sites in a cooperative manner at the local level, while seeking greater efficiencies and clarity in methods of marketing, message delivery, and content at the nine-county multi-regional level.

An example of this greater multi-regional efficiency and clarity is in the development of marketing materials produced for the Michener's Chesapeake region of the byway. Materials can easily be developed that are similar to, but clearly distinguishable from, those currently used by Chesapeake Country. This can be accomplished by using a similar layout and graphic identity but different image within the logo, coloring, regional tag-line, and/or other means. The creation and design of future marketing messages and materials should be coordinated through the newly formed nine-county partnership (to be discussed as part of the management strategies in February 2011).

Recommendations for interpretation of Michener's Chesapeake as part of the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway, including localized sub-themes and tag lines, are outlined in this chapter in the section below titled *Presentation of the Byway*.

1.4 Byway Attractions

The Michener portion of the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway includes an array of existing interpretive attractions currently marketed by Talbot, Dorchester, and Caroline Counties. The primary attractions for the byway reflect the maritime heritage associated with the Chesapeake Bay and the related agricultural landscapes and market towns that evolved along its tributaries. Byway interpretation should introduce visitors to this landscape and waterscape by providing linkages between communities, attractions, and interesting places. A primary goal of the byway is to support existing attractions by wrapping its interpretive presentation around the themes and subjects they interpret and by leading visitors to the attractions, both physically and thematically. Conversely, attractions are key to the byway's success because they provide destinations – places to go that give the byway excursion purpose.

The heritage tourism portion of this corridor management plan outlines three categories of attractions in terms of visitor readiness: Full Service, Limited Service, and Future Site. For purposes of interpreting the byway, we should also add Self-Guided Sites to this list.

Full Service Attractions are currently ready for all types of visitors, They are open regular hours and days of operation; they provide visitor services (rest rooms, accessibility, visitor information, etc.); and they offer professional interpretative programming.

Limited Service Attractions can accommodate visitors but have limited hours, interpretation, and visitor facilities.

Self-Guided Sites are publicly accessible sites where self-guided interpretive exhibits or materials are available but where no staffing or visitor services are present.

Future Sites are sites that have great potential for visitors under any of the three categories noted above but must implement plans to develop facilities and/or increase hours of operation, interpretation, and visitor facilities.

An analysis of existing attractions available to the byway with respect to these categories of visitor readiness is necessary in planning for the type of visitor experience that can be created along each individual segment of the byway as well as the byway as a whole. Please note that this categorization is not a judgment as to the quality or significance of any individual site. It is simply an assessment of available visitor services. Any limited service attraction can become a full service attraction by enhancing its visitor services. In fact, a specific goal of the byway is identify which attractions can be enhanced and to assist them in doing so if they so wish.

In reviewing the existing attractions within the three-county area served by the Michener portion of the byway, eight existing full service attractions have been identified. They include:

- Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum* St. Michaels, Talbot County
- The Historical Society of Talbot County Easton, Talbot County
- Academy Art Museum Easton, Talbot County
- The Visitor Center at Sailwinds Park* Cambridge, Dorchester County
- LaGrange Plantation Cambridge, Dorchester County
- Dorchester Center for the Arts Cambridge, Dorchester County
- Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge* Dorchester County
- Museum of Rural Life Denton, Caroline County

Seventeen existing limited service attractions have been identified within the byway region:

- Wye Grist Mill & Museum* Wye Mills, Talbot County
- Little Red Schoolhouse Longwoods, Talbot County
- Pickering Creek Audubon Center* near Longwoods, Talbot County
- St. Michael's Museum, St. Mary's Square St. Michaels, Talbot County
- Tilghman Island Waterman's Museum Tilghman Island, Talbot County
- Phillips Wharf Environmental Center Tilghman Island, Talbot County
- The Oxford Museum Oxford, Talbot County
- The Rural Life Museum of Trappe Trappe, Talbot County
- Nathan of Dorchester Skipjack* Cambridge, Dorchester County
- Harriet Tubman Museum & Ed. Center Cambridge, Dorchester County
- Richardson Maritime Museum* Cambridge, Dorchester County
- Ruark Boatworks Cambridge, Dorchester County
- Stanley Institute School Cambridge, Dorchester County
- Spocott Windmill Route 343, Dorchester County
- Vienna Heritage Museum Vienna, Dorchester County
- Choptank River Heritage Center* Denton, Caroline County
- Linchester Flouring Mill Complex Preston, Caroline County

•

Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network Sites

Also noted with an asterisk (*) above, there are additional sites that provide outdoor interpretation in a publicly accessible location throughout the byway region. These additional sites include:

- Wye Island National Resource Management Area, Queen Anne's County
- Tuckahoe State Park, Caroline County

- Adkins Arboretum, Caroline County
- Choptank & Tuckahoe Rivers Water Trail, Caroline County
- Martinak State Park, Caroline County
- Nanticoke River Water Trail

Numerous publicly accessible locations for future self-guided interpretation are located throughout the byway. These include public parks, wildlife refuges, boat launches, walking tours of historic communities, churches and cemeteries, marinas, and selected commercial sites. Such sites will be a primary focus for interpretive enhancement in implementation of the byway initiative. Observations on potential self-guided sites are noted in discussion of the byway interpretive presentation below.

Future sites under development along the byway include:

- The Richardson Maritime Heritage Center Cambridge, Dorchester County
(to be expanded from limited service to a full service attraction)
- Choptank River Lighthouse Project Cambridge, Dorchester County
- Federalsburg Area Heritage Museum Federalsburg, Caroline County
- Exeter House and Idlewyld Mill Complex Federalsburg, Caroline County
- Handsell Historic House north of Vienna, Dorchester County

1.5 Presentation of the Byway

The Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway is a heritage travel experience presenting the unique landscapes and communities of Maryland's Eastern Shore to visitors. The byway links communities, attractions, and interpretive sites along its route, providing opportunities for visitors to engage in a variety of activities. Through the byway experience, the character and significance of the Chesapeake landscape and its heritage is made clear to visitors. By connecting the region's communities and attractions, the byway supports their programming and demonstrates the interconnected relationships between them. Interpretive stops along the byway present the stories of the Chesapeake landscape as a whole and help set the linked communities and attractions long the route in context.

The Michener's Chesapeake portion of the Chesapeake Country Byway, extends from Centreville in Queen Anne's County south to Vienna on the Nanticoke River and is comprised of a primary route with a series of eight branches. The Michener portion of the byway crosses numerous tributary rivers and streams including: Wye, Miles, Choptank, Blackwater, Marshyhope, and Nanticoke Rivers. Each portion of the byway presents aspects of the Chesapeake Country landscape in accordance with byway's thematic structure and the character of the specific resources, attractions, and communities along it. Concepts for organization of the interpretation of each segment of the byway are outlined below.

Chesapeake Country: *Exploring Michener's Chesapeake*

In his 1978 novel *Chesapeake*, James A. Michener depicts four centuries of humankind's relationship to the Chesapeake Bay and its distinctive natural resources. While the characters, events, and even some places are fictional, the lives, experiences, and evolving relationships between people and the bay's natural and cultural landscapes are described in ways that promote understanding and appreciation of the richness and significance of this place. As outlined in Chesapeake Country's central theme statement, *Life here is inseparable from the Chesapeake Bay – as estuary and as watershed. This is true today as it has been historically.* Like Michener's

novel, the byway explores the evolving relationships between people and the Chesapeake Bay landscape and waterscape over time.

Michener's novel is divided into fourteen sections or 'voyages' and covers the four centuries from 1583 to the time of the novel's writing in 1978. Geographically, the broad sweep of the Chesapeake Bay landscape is depicted, but the stories center around the lower Choptank River region, at the heart of Chesapeake Country.

(this section to be revised with additional detail from the novel)

Voyage 1 takes place in the sixteenth century and depicts Native American lifeways and their relationship to the bay through the lives and experiences of its characters before the appearance of European settlers.

Voyage 2, 3 and 4 occur in the seventeenth century and portray the early settlement of the bay's estuary, its tenuous beginnings, and the introduction of tobacco in the later part of the century and its role in shaping the regional economy and social life.

Voyages 5 and 6 describe the lives of *Chesapeake's* characters in the early eighteenth century as settlement within the bay region became fully established and began to thrive and prosper. Wheat became the primary staple of the economy, and the Eastern Shore became known as the 'breadbasket of the colonies.' The book covers the Colonial period through the Revolutionary War and establishment of the new nation, a period that is still evident through the buildings, plantations, landings, and historic communities of the region. The evolution of Chesapeake Bay clipper-schooner helped revolutionize global trade, and the shipping of flour to the West Indies and elsewhere established the prosperity of the bay region.

Voyages 7 through 11 follow the evolving lives of the *Chesapeake's* characters through the nineteenth century. A period of growth and dynamic change, this century saw the transformation of the region from river-oriented to rail-oriented transportation, with a move away from wheat production and the development of canning and other new forms of industrial growth. Perhaps most significantly, the Age of the Waterman developed toward the end of the century as the oyster became a nationally popular food that transformed the regional economy.

Voyages 12 through 14 trace the novel's events within the context of the twentieth century, through the personal economic challenges of the Depression and recovery. It reflects the nation's awakening to the despoliation of the Chesapeake Bay and its landscape and the failure to appreciate, value, and protect it.

Portions of the Chesapeake Country Byway will explore the region's evolving heritage and relationships to the bay that provide the context for Michener's novel. Like Michener, a visitor to the area will be able to glimpse over 350 years of American history in the landscape, communities, and people of the Midshore area. The same window on history that is available to visitors today inspired Michener's work. A special 'supporting story' and touring itinerary, building upon Talbot County's existing itinerary, will be created as an overlay of the region to tell the story of Michener's inspiration for and writing of his novel as well as the various periods, characters, places, and stories it depicts.

Exploring Michener's Chesapeake: Maritime Heritage Route, Centreville to Vienna

The primary route of the Michener portion of the Chesapeake Country byway tracks south from Centreville through Wye Mills, Easton, Trappe and Cambridge to Blackwater before turning east toward Vienna on the Nanticoke River. Interpretively, it is divided into three sections.

Section 1: Wye Mills

Theme: *Colony and Nation-building*

Attractions:

- Wye Grist Mill and Museum
- Little Red Schoolhouse
- Pickering Creek Audubon Center

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Section 2: Easton, Trappe and Cambridge

Themes: *Living with and Estuary,*

Peopling the Land: Change and Continuity

Inspired by the Bay – cultural and artistic expression

Building by the Bay – architecture and landscapes

Easton Attractions:

- The Historical Society of Talbot County (full service)
- Academy Art Museum (full service)

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Trappe Attractions:

- The Rural Life Museum of Trappe

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Cambridge Attractions:

- The Visitor Center at Sailwinds Park (full service)
- LaGrange Plantation (full service)
- Dorchester Center for the Arts (full service)
- Nathan of Dorchester Skipjack
- Harriet Tubman Museum & Ed. Center
- Richardson Maritime Museum
- Ruark Boatworks
- Stanley Institute School

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Section 3: Blackwater

Themes: *Changes in the Land – the Chesapeake Bay is a dynamic system.*

Recreation and Renewal

Attractions:

- Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Discovering Michener's Chesapeake: Agricultural Heritage Route (or Branch), Denton/Federalsburg/Vienna

Theme: *Working the Land* with the tag line and marketing message

Ebb and Flow – exploring the upper reaches of the Chesapeake watershed

Attractions:

- Choptank River Heritage Center (Denton)
- Vienna Heritage Museum (Vienna)

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

St. Michaels/Tilghman Island Branch

Themes: *Working the Water*

Recreation and Renewal

Attractions:

- Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (full service)
- St. Michael's Museum, St. Mary's Square
- Tilghman Island Waterman's Museum

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Oxford/Bellevue Branch

Theme: *Peopling the Land: Change and Continuity* through the overlay story of
Michener's Chesapeake

Attractions:

- The Oxford Museum
- Oxford/Bellevue Ferry

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Hudson Branch

Theme: *Working the Land*

Attractions:

- Spocott Windmill

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Blackwater Branch

Theme: *Changes in the Land – the Chesapeake Bay is a dynamic system.*

Attractions:

- Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Hoopersville Branch

Theme: *Working the Water*

Attractions: none

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Elliot Island Branch

Theme: *Changes in the Land – the Chesapeake Bay is a dynamic system.*

Attractions: none

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Hurlock/East New Market/Secretary/Linchester Mill (Preston) Branch

Theme: *Working the Land*

Attractions: none

Summary: (to be discussed at 11/18 workshop)

Overlay Supporting Stories

Like the existing Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway, *Michener's Chesapeake* will have the opportunity to create supporting stories that overlay attractions and resources byway-wide, possibly involving multiple communities, route segments, and branches. Several of these supporting stories are already presented in county marketing materials within the region, and some are included in the themes for routes and branches noted above. Supporting stories might include:

- Michener's Chesapeake – exploration of the stories, places, and characters from the novel and Michener's writing of the book
- Birding the bay – currently marketed through a map and guide
- Agriculture and Agritourism – working farms, nurseries, and markets that can be visited
- Frederick Douglas – in association with the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Scenic Byway
- African American Heritage – associated with existing communities such as Cambridge and Federalsburg
- Food for the Soul – historic churches and religious pluralism
- Inspired by the Bay – culture and artistic expression