

Chickahominy Water Trail



Photo courtesy of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Chickahominy River

Welcome to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, the nation's first water trail. As you retrace the voyages of Captain Smith on the Chickahominy River, you can rediscover the Virginia he knew- its natural splendor and rich Native culture. As you explore the Chickahominy's waters, imagine the abundance that greeted Smith and his fellow Englishmen. Great schools of fish teemed in the clear river, bald cypress trees grew tall along the shore, and overhead waterfowl flew in flocks so thick the sky darkened as they passed.

The Chickahominy River, with its rich array of marshes, swamps and the wildlife they support, has played a vital role in our past. The river sustained a powerful Native people bearing its name, helped spare the starving Jamestown colony, and remains a cradle of ecological diversity and a destination for unparalleled recreational opportunities. Today, the modern Chickahominy and Eastern Chickahominy Indian Tribes celebrate their culture that began centuries ago on the river's banks. Explore the lore of the Chickahominy River by paddling its creeks, fishing its waters, birding its swamps, hunting its marshes, or tracing its history and culture in the modern landscape. Learn more about the Chickahominy Water Trail, Captain Smith's travels, and Chickahominy culture by visiting interpretive signs at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, River's Rest Marina, Rockahock Campground, and the Chickahominy Tribal Center.

www.smithtrail.net and www.johnsmithtrail.org



Pileated Woodpecker



Bald Cypress



Painted Turtle



Prothonotary Warbler

Photos by: Kim Taylor, Thomas Puzino, Gary P. Fleming and Steven J. Boskaut.

BALD CYPRESS SWAMP

By providing excellent habitat for many rare plants and animals, swamps protect biodiversity. As safe nurseries for fish species, swamps have a far-reaching positive impact.



AQUATIC VEGETATION BEDS

Submerged aquatic vegetation adds life-giving oxygen to our waters, feeds migratory waterfowl, and provides habitat for young fish and crustaceans.



Striped Bass

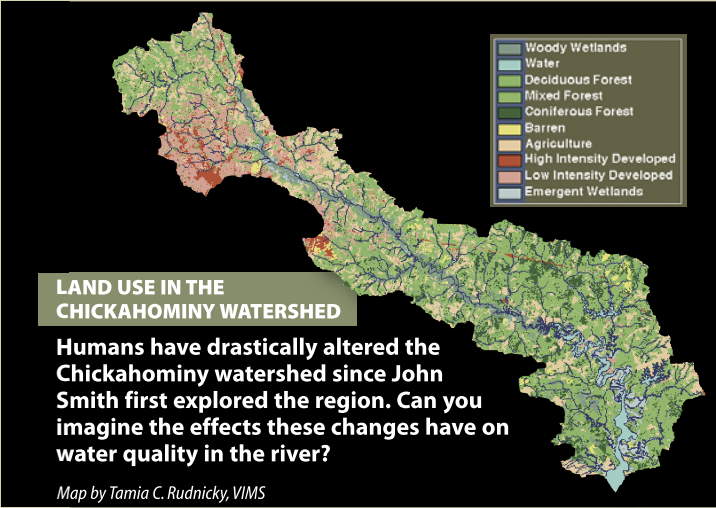


Yellow Perch



Blue Crab

Photos by: Southeastern Regional Taxonomic Center, South Carolina D.N.R., JRA and DCR.



LAND USE IN THE CHICKAHOMINY WATERSHED

Humans have drastically altered the Chickahominy watershed since John Smith first explored the region. Can you imagine the effects these changes have on water quality in the river?

Map by Tamia C. Rudnicki, WIMS

WHAT DOES A HEALTHY RIVER PROVIDE FOR US?

- Clean water for drinking, irrigation, and industry
- Healthy fish populations for commercial and sport fisheries
- Healthy populations of waterfowl and other game animals
- A boost for local economies from tourism and recreation
- Safe and memorable recreation opportunities
- Habitat for threatened and endangered species
- Protection from flooding and severe erosion
- A vital place to share traditions with the next generation

PADDLING & BOATING SAFETY TIPS

sudden weather changes.

- Cold water is dangerous. Sudden immersion in cold water contributes to most boating deaths. Always wear a life jacket and dress appropriately.
- When it's hot, wear light clothing, sunglasses and a hat. Apply sun block and drink non-alcoholic fluids regularly.
- Wear protective footwear.
- Travel with others. Boating safety increases with numbers.

POWER BOAT OPERATORS

- Do not ride or sit on the bow, gunwales, transom or the decking over the bow while under power.
- Reduce speed to avoid endangering persons or property by the effect of the motorboat's wake. Always operate at a safe speed.
- Display proper navigation lights from sunset to sunrise and during periods of reduced visibility.

PADDLERS

- In canoes, kneel down when running through rough water and during windy conditions.
- Portage around obstacles if necessary.
- Use a powerful flashlight to alert other boaters from sunset to sunrise and during periods of reduced visibility.
- If your boat flips over, remain calm. Hold on to your paddles and the boat if possible.
- If capsized, stay on the upstream side of the boat or float feet first while maneuvering to safety.
- When moving on small boats, always have three points of contact (two feet and one hand or two hands and one foot).
- Be aware of tidal flows on this river.

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT A HEALTHY RIVER?

- Use minimal or no chemical fertilizer and pesticides
- Conserve water and energy in our homes
- Drive less; use transit, carpools, bikes and walking
- Remember that whatever goes onto our streets or down our storm drains goes into the river
- Control erosion by planting bare ground
- Volunteer to help with a watershed restoration
- Support the conservation of undeveloped land
- Join an organization that advocates for clean water

Ecological Communities of the Chickahominy



FRESHWATER TIDAL MARSH

The great plant diversity found in freshwater marshes makes them a vital source of food for waterfowl and other animals. Marshes keep our waterways clean by absorbing and filtering polluted storm-water runoff.



Red-winged blackbird



Arrow Arum



Great Blue Heron

Photos by: Doug Norton, Gary P. Fleming.



Immature Bald Eagle

Mallard Duck

Osprey

Great Blue Heron

Great Egret

BIRDS OF THE CHICKAHOMINY

Photos by: Doug Norton and Mike Baird.

Chickahominy Water Trail: The Tidal River

1 CAPTAIN SMITH'S EXPLORATIONS AND CAPTURE; DECEMBER, 1607

In December 1607 Smith once again journeyed up the Chickahominy River. On this trip his ambition was more exploration than trade. Venturing deep into the heart of Chickahominy territory Smith was captured and spent a month as a captive of Chief Powhatan. Smith put in at towns he called Mattapanient, Morinogh, Askakep, Moysonec, Righkahauk, Nechanicok, Mattalunt, and Attamuspiank. The corn offered in trade was less than on his first two trips, yet Smith still managed to fill his barge. He left a crew of seven on the barge at Apocant, the highest town on the Chickahominy River and hired two Chickahominy to guide him further up river in a canoe. Two others of the crew departed with Smith and the Chickahominy guides. The barge crew was enticed ashore by women and explored a bit, but were attacked and returned to their barge. One Englishman of the crew was captured and before being slain gave up Smith's location upriver to a party of 300 bowmen-Paspahegh, Chiskiack, Mattaponi, Pamunkey, and Youghtanund-whom Smith took to be hunting with Opechancanough. While examining the river and the soil with one guide, Smith was surprised and captured. Smith remained prisoner of the Powhatan for about a month, during which time the celebrated incident involving Pocahontas took place, most certainly an adoption ritual whose meaning was misunderstood by Smith.

2 NECOTOWANCE'S PATH

Near the present-day site of Walker's Dam, routes used by Virginia Indians for travel and trade converged on the Chickahominy River. The name Necotowance's Path appears in Charles City land patents after 1646, the year of Necotowance's Treaty. Perhaps the name was applied to the trail because it was the authorized route for Indian messengers who were reporting to Westover on the James under the terms of the Treaty. Most likely these trails pre-existed their naming by the English and would have been part of a network of trails running along the coastal plain and into the interior used by Native people for trade.

7 TANKS PASPAHEGH CREEK

Tanks - meaning little and Paspasheg meaning mouth of (the creek) - was the Algonquian name for Morris Creek. It may have marked a divide between the Chickahominy and Paspasheg territories. Today Morris Creek is beloved of fisherman, boaters, and bird watchers for its productive waters, rich marshes and intriguing swamps

9 CAPTAIN SMITH'S TRADING TRIPS; NOVEMBER, 1607

In the fall of 1607 the Jamestown settlers began to worry about their food supply for the coming winter. The long-awaited second supply had not arrived and food stores were growing thin. Capt. John Smith set out on a series of trading expeditions that led him into Chickahominy territory. Smith successfully traded for sufficient corn to feed the colonists through the winter.

Not far from this point at present-day Chickahominy Riverfront Park, John Smith was hailed by a Chickahominy Indian. The Native offered to escort Smith to the Chickahominy district, which lay further upriver. Smith and the guide traveled by moonlight to the guide's hometown of Manosquosick, a quarter of a mile from the river's edge. The town contained 30-40 houses. At least one Englishman was brought before the village that night and feasted.

Smith found the Chickahominy eager to trade with him. He was able to secure several boat loads of corn that helped sustain the vulnerable young colony.

3 FORT JAMES

In 1644 the English constructed Fort James on "the Ridge of the Chickahominy," presumably meaning high bluffs overlooking the river in this vicinity. Fort James was one of a network of forts on several Virginia rivers built by the English as Indians fought back against the loss of their homeland. After three years Fort James was transferred to Thomas Rolfe, son of Pocahontas.

4 MAMANA HUNT

As Captain Smith made his way upriver in November 1607, word spread to other Chickahominy villages of the trading venture en route. Smith continued upriver and visited towns he called Oraniocck, Mansa, Apanaocck, Werawahon, and Mamanahunt. Trading was heavy, especially at Mamanahunt, described by Smith as the center of the Chickahominy territory. There, Smith reported that over 200 Chickahominy gathered to trade, overloading his barge with corn.

John Smith returned to Mamanahunt the next day, again to trade. The villagers assembled 300-400 hundred baskets of corn. At his departure, the Chickahominy requested Smith and companions to fire their weapons. Indian canoes followed his shallow back down river. This is an approximate location for Mamanahunt.

5 PEACE HILL NECK

Peace Hill is the historical name of the plantation that occupied this peninsula. It is believed the neck of land was given this name because it was the site of the making of the Chickahominy Treaty of 1614. Chickahominy independence and security were compromised by Pocahontas's marriage to John Rolfe and the ensuing peace with the Powhatan Indians. To secure their situation the Chickahominy sent two men with gifts of deer to Jamestown. They requested an end to hostilities and offered to become an ally of the English. Sir Thomas Dale journeyed to their territory with 50 men and found a welcome party waiting. The eight governing Chickahominy Councilors assembled and within several days a treaty was negotiated. The terms of this unwritten agreement required the Chickahominy to pay an annual tribute of corn and to supply warriors when needed for defense of the region from invasion by the Spanish or hostile Indian tribes.

6 CHICKAHOMINY INDIANS

Upriver from approximately this area, the Chickahominy Indians thrived. The Chickahominy alone – of all the Tidewater Native communities – remained independent of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom, or the tribes held in a tributary relationship to Chief Powhatan prior to the arrival of the English. The Chickahominy also preferred a different form of government being ruled by a council of eight elders or Cawcawassaughes, rather than a singled chief or Werocano. Their population is estimated to have been about 1500 when English settlers landed at Jamestown and was large compared to other tribes in the area. This may have been due to the number of marshes - and the food supply provided by such marshes - within the territory they controlled. The Chickahominy lived on both sides of the river in semi-permanent towns. John Smith's printed map indicates nine Chickahominy towns on the south side of the river and six on the north side. An earlier map shows another four villages, three on the north side and one on the south side.

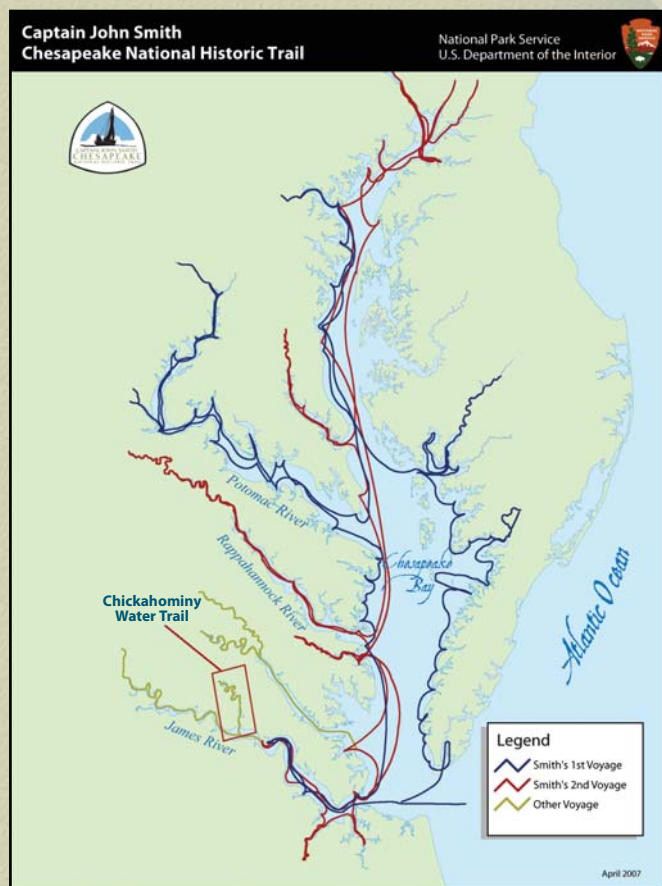
The Chickahominy, like other tribes of Eastern Virginia, intermittently traded and warred with the English until they were pushed from their native lands. In 1645 the English attacked Ozinies, the last surviving Chickahominy town. Survivors fled to the Upper Mattaponi River and to Indian Town on the Pamunkey River. The following year Necotowance's Treaty formally excluded all native people from the south side of the Pamunkey River. The Chickahominy occupied tribal lands near modern-day Aylett until those lands were lost in 1702.


A cultural revival around 1900 led to the organization of two modern-day tribes: the Chickahominy Tribe numbering about 800 members located principally in Charles City County and the Chickahominy Tribe Eastern Division located principally in New Kent County.

10 PASPAHEGH INDIANS

The Paspapegh Indians occupied the north side of the James River both east and west of the mouth of the Chickahominy River. They were a small community, numbering only about 160. Jamestown was planted in the midst of their territory, and - not surprisingly - the Paspapeghs were one of the first tribes to engage in armed conflict with the English and one of the first to succumb to that conflict. Their Weroance, Wowinchapuncke, was one of the mightiest warriors in the Powhatan chieftom. Following the slaughter of much of the tribe and Wowinchapuncke's death, the Paspapegh disbursed to other communities.

GORDON AND NETTLES CREEK If the tide is high at midday, paddle with the tide up Gordon Creek in the morning and follow the tide out along Nettles Creek in the afternoon, returning by the mainstem of the Chickahominy River. A rich diversity of wildlife awaits you along this 7-mile paddling route.



	Chickahominy River Water Access Points	Contact Information	Chickahominy Water Trail Interpretive Sign	Boat Ramp	Hand-Carry Boat Launch	Restrooms	Camping	Accommodations	Parking	Marina	Boat Fuel	Drinking Water	Restaurant	Grocery	Public Phone	Fishing Access from Shore	Route	Coordinates
1	Chickahominy Riverfront Park Canoe/Kayak Launch	(757) 258-5020 www.jccgov.com			*				*							*	5	N 37° 15.903' W 76° 52.438'
2	Chickahominy Riverfront Park Boat Ramp and Campground	(757) 258-5020 www.jccgov.com	*			*	*		*			*		*	*	*	5	N 37° 16.103' W 76° 52.351'
3	Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area Morris Creek Boat Ramp	(804) 829-6580 www.dgif.virginia.gov/wmas		*			*		*							*	621	N 37° 18.003' W 76° 53.947'
4	Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area Canoe/Kayak Access Point	(804) 829-6580 www.dgif.virginia.gov/wmas			*												623	N 37° 19.100' W 76° 56.126'
5	Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area Gravel Ramp and Canoe/Kayak Access Point	(804) 829-6580 www.dgif.virginia.gov/wmas															621	N 37° 19.010' W 76° 52.848'
6	James City County's Brickyard Landing Boat Ramp	(757) 259-5360 www.jccgov.com		*					*								610	N 37° 22.221' W 76° 52.810'
7	Chickahominy Haven Boat Ramp			*									*				S Riverside Dr.	N 37° 22.042' W 76° 53.330'
8	River's Rest Marina Boat Ramp	(804) 829-2753 www.riversrest.com	*	*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	623	N 37° 21.772' W 76° 54.753'
9	Colonial Harbor Boat Ramp	(804) 966-5523 www.colonialharbor.com		*		*			*	*	*	*	*		*	*	S Waterside Dr.	N 37° 24.088' W 76° 54.843'
10	Riverside Campground Boat Ramp	(804) 966-5536 www.riversidecamp2.com		*		*	*	*	*	*		*				*	627	N 37° 23.682' W 76° 55.970'
11	Rockahock Campground Boat Ramp	(804) 966-8367 www.rockahock.com	*	*		*	*	*	*	*		*			*	*	649	N 37° 24.402' W 76° 56.198'

This map and guide were created by the James River Association with the assistance of Charles City County, New Kent County, James City County, the Chickahominy Tribe, the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the Virginia Council on Indians, and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. For more information contact the James River Association at (804) 788-8811 or visit www.jamesriverassociation.org. Find more information on following Captain Smith's explorations of Virginia at www.johnsmithtrail.org and tracing his voyages around the Chesapeake Bay at www.smithtrail.net.

