

Making Connections

Colonial National Historical Park Enhances Economic Vitality in Virginia's Historic Triangle



National Parks Conservation Association®
Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®

Colonial National Historical Park ...at a glance



Map: National Park Service, 2007

Park Facts

- Colonial National Historical Park (NHP) includes Cape Henry Memorial, Historic Jamestowne, Yorktown Battlefield, and the Colonial Parkway, a scenic highway connecting Jamestown, Colonial Williamsburg, and Yorktown—also known as the Historic Triangle.
- Authorized in 1930 as a national monument, Colonial was designated a national historical park in 1936.
- The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation operates a town-sized, private living history museum at Williamsburg, within the legislative boundaries of the park. Preservation Virginia owns acreage and facilities within park boundaries at Jamestown, and jointly manages Historic Jamestowne with the National Park Service.
- The park encompasses 8,677 acres, in several parcels. Driving the 23 miles of the Colonial Parkway, visitors travel through nearly 400 years of American colonial history, and a variety of natural habitats.
- The park hosted more than 3.4 million visitors in 2010—including drivers on the Colonial Parkway. Some 363,000 of these stopped in at park visitor centers and participated in programs.
- In 2010, \$42.5 million in park visitor spending supported 1,184 local, private-sector jobs.[†]
- In 2009, the National Park Service employed 81 staff members, whose wages supported an additional 39 local jobs.[†]
- Portions of the park are located in the City of Williamsburg and in two counties: York and James City.

[†] See p. 6 of this report for more detail.



Since 1919, the non-profit, non-partisan National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. NPCA, its members, and partners work together to protect the park system and preserve our nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage for generations to come.

Every national park exists in a context. Colonial National Historical Park's context is marked by a long tradition of support and partnership. Uniquely, Colonial NHP connects an array of public and private sites that complement each other in preserving and interpreting a rich history spanning the American colonial period and beyond.

The Historic Triangle region has built an extraordinarily successful tourism industry. Colonial NHP is a strong component. This *Making Connections* report explores the park's economic contributions to its neighboring communities, delving beyond its role as a destination for history-seeking travelers.

This report also identifies some issues and opportunities that could affect the future of the park, Historic Triangle communities, and the broader region. *Making Connections* is also an invitation. We hope after you read this report, you will be more involved, and forge new connections that will continue this region's success. Here are some ways you can contribute:

- Visit, enjoy, and volunteer at your national park. Volunteers make the park and other historical sites in the area tick, both behind the scenes and interacting with visitors. Find out more at www.nps.gov/colo/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm.
- Capitalize on current events to showcase your local national park. Collaborations leading to the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown and other important commemorations suggest the power of organizing around events such as the 150th anniversary of the Civil War (2011-2015) and the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service (2016).
- Participate early and constructively in community planning and economic development processes.
- Choose clean air and clean water. A healthy environment makes good economic sense. Join Virginians for Healthy Air at www.npca.org/vahealthyair and the Choose Clean Water Coalition at www.choosecleanwater.org.
- Add your voice in support of our parks by joining National Parks Conservation Association at www.npca.org.

For more information about how you can get involved, contact:

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Photo above: Park volunteers in Royal Artillery uniforms fire a six-pound cannon during a living history demonstration. **Photo: NPS**

Introduction

In the late 1920s, Virginia Governor Harry Flood Byrd began referring to Virginia as a “virtual museum of the founding and growth of America.” Much of that early history is concentrated, commemorated, and preserved in the “Historic Triangle” of Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown.










By the 1920s, however, many of these memorials to America’s formative years had fallen into disrepair. A convergence of private and public interest then put the area on the road to renewal.

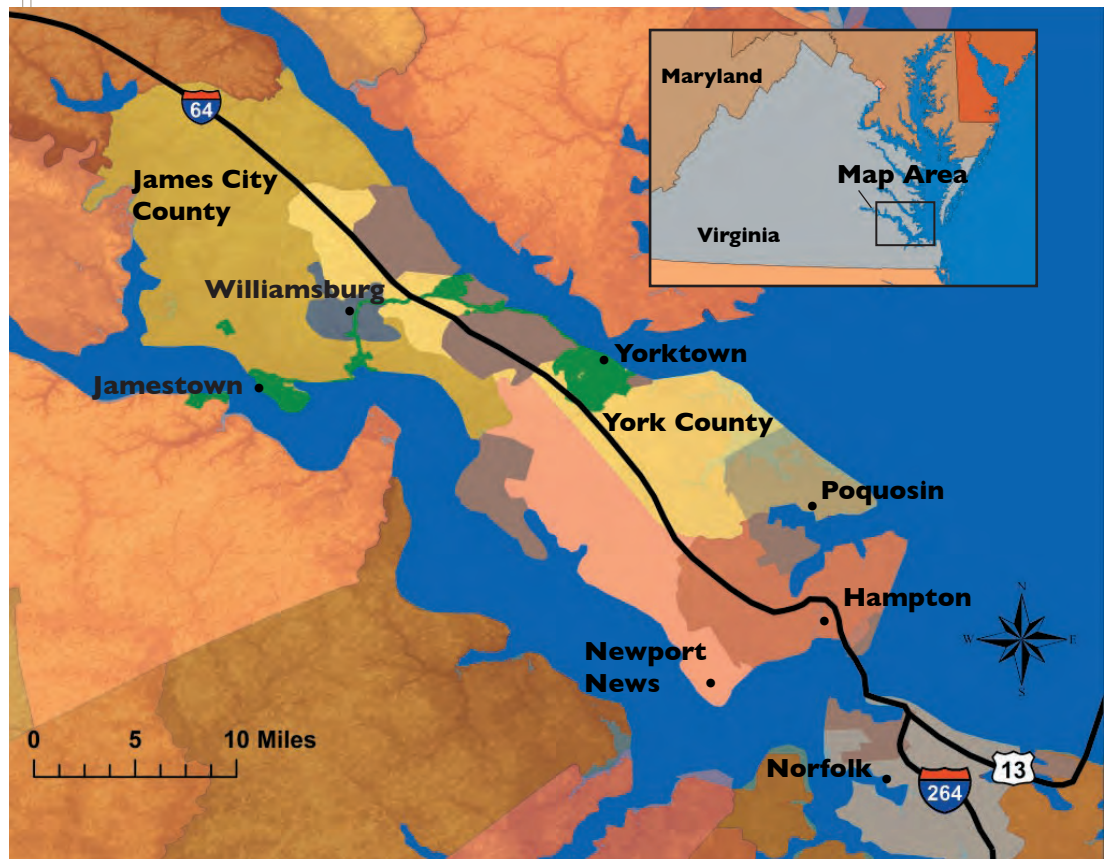
Inspired by efforts of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and others to preserve and promote interest in historical sites such as Jamestown, state leaders began to see tourism as a pathway to economic growth. Under the leadership of Virginia businessman William Carson—noted for proclamations such as, “Scenery will be Virginia’s next big cash crop”—the Virginia Conservation and Development Commission (CDC) focused on developing the state’s natural and historic treasures into visitor attractions.

At the same time, philanthropist and national parks activist John D. Rockefeller committed to restore Williamsburg, Virginia’s colonial capital. Public and private support began to coalesce around the vision of national recognition for the sites encompassed within the Historic Triangle. The lob-

Map of the region surrounding Colonial National Historical Park and the Historic Triangle. The focal area for this report includes James City County, York County, and the municipalities of Hampton, Newport News, Poquosin, and Williamsburg. Map: Dan Servian, Direwolf Graphics

Legend

-  Colonial NHP
-  James City County
-  City of Hampton
-  City of Newport News
-  City of Poquosin
-  York County
-  City of Williamsburg
-  Department of Defense
-  Interstate/major highway



bying seems to have begun in earnest when Kenneth Chorley, who headed up Rockefeller's Williamsburg restoration, laid out a plan for a national historical site linking the three points of the Historic Triangle.

Already working closely with the National Park Service (NPS) in an effort that would lead to the establishment of Shenandoah National Park, Carson and the CDC stepped in to shepherd along the process. In 1930, President Herbert Hoover signed the bill recognizing Colonial National Monument, which would later become Colonial National Historical Park (NHP). Between 1931 and 1957, Colonial Parkway—the treelined drive that connects the Historic Triangle's three points—was designed and built.¹

As intended from its inception, the park spans the beginning, middle, and end of the colonial period, preserves the rural and historic feel of the place, and connects the efforts of private and public groups with stewardship over the sites in the area.

In the Historic Triangle—and in Virginia more broadly—Governor Byrd's vision to tap into America's growing tourist trade as an economic development strategy worked. Tourism is an \$18 billion industry in Virginia,² and Williamsburg is its #2 attraction. Colonial Parkway, Historic Jamestowne (Jamestown Island), Jamestown Settlement, and Yorktown Battlefield are all on the list of top 25 visitor attractions in the state.³ Each year, more than three million recreational visitors drive Colonial Parkway, and several hundred thousand tourists take advantage of park visitor centers, interpretive exhibits, and programs.⁴

Colonial National Historical Park has become much more than a monument to the establishment of the United States. Its importance to the surrounding region transcends its role as a tourist draw. The park:

- 1) Encourages visitation to the area and, with other sites in the Historic Triangle, anchors the region's identity for travelers and locals alike.
- 2) Supports local jobs and economic benefits.
- 3) Is attractive to locals as a place to visit, recreate, and enjoy as open space.
- 4) Could help the region further diversify its tourism identity and economy.

Colonial NHP was created as a collaborative park with the kind of partnership and vision that will continue to be instrumental in crafting the future of both the park and the Historic Triangle.

Park Partners in Preservation and Interpretation

APVA Preservation Virginia

Owns 22.5 acres within the park at Jamestown, and has jointly managed Historic Jamestowne with the National Park Service since 1934. Its programs complement NPS offerings, and include an acclaimed archaeological research and education initiative.

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Preserves and operates the town-sized living history museum at Williamsburg, the restored 18th-century revolutionary-era Virginia capital. The nonprofit foundation owns this 301-acre site within park boundaries. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation also manages Preservation Virginia's programs at Historic Jamestowne.

Eastern National Parks Association

Operates colonial-era glassmaking demonstrations at Jamestown Glasshouse, as well as a museum store at Yorktown Battlefield. Proceeds are donated to the park.

Colonial National Historical Park Helps Anchor the Region's Identity

As motorists enjoy the Colonial Parkway's forested stretches and panoramic views, they traverse America's early history. The parkway links the early settlement history at Jamestown with the colonial political history at Williamsburg, and the Revolutionary War story of Yorktown Battlefield.

Visitors to the Historic Triangle expect and find a variety of history-oriented destinations and experiences, mostly focused on the settlement and founding of the United States of America. According to a 2005 strategic plan for tourism commissioned by the Williamsburg Convention and Visitor Bureau, that focus has given the area a strong edge over other Virginia destinations in attracting travelers interested in history and heritage.

The strategic plan's authors identified Colonial National Historical Park as a strong contributor to this identity. With the span of American history represented at Colonial National Historical Park—from the site of the first permanent English settlement in North America at Jamestown, to Yorktown Battlefield, where the last battle of the Revolutionary War was fought—the park is an “accelerant” for tourism in the area. While Colonial Williamsburg and Busch Gardens are key drivers of many people's travel decisions, the park gives people more options for their visits and helps solidify travelers' choice of the Historic Triangle as a destination.⁵ The park also offers lower-cost options to augment visits to higher-priced attractions in the area.

Visitors Use a Variety of Area Attractions

A 2001 survey of visitors to Historic Jamestowne—one of the main destinations within the park—shows significant percentages of park visitors also take in other historic sites and activities in the area. About two of five Historic Jamestowne visitors went to Yorktown, also within the park. About three-quarters went to Jamestown Settlement (a living history museum operated

by the Commonwealth of Virginia). A similar percentage also visited Colonial Williamsburg, the world's largest living history museum, operated by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation on the site John D. Rockefeller committed to restore in the 1920s.

The park has earned the loyalty of many visitors. In the 2001 survey, 30 percent of Historic Jamestowne visitors reported they had been to the park more than

Visitors to Historic Jamestowne listen to a park ranger's presentation, with the Jamestown Memorial Church in the background.

Photo: © Natalie Ramirez, National Parks Conservation Association





The Colonial Parkway in springtime. The forested buffer that lines much of the road corridor helps preserve the sense of driving through history.

Photo: NPS

once in the preceding five years.⁶ More than one in ten had visited more than twice during that time.

The Colonial Parkway Connects History and Habitat

In 2010, the park welcomed more than 3.4 million recreational visitors—most of whom drove the Colonial Parkway at some point in their visit. For many, the parkway is the focal point of their park trip, or the only part of the park they took in. Park staff estimate that about 363,000 people took advantage of park visitor centers and reserved activities. Many others—especially locals—access the park’s tour roads and natural areas on foot, bike, and horseback, and may not be included in park visitor counts.

The parkway serves a crucial connecting role in the Historic Triangle, traversing 23 miles of habitat from the marshes and shoreline of the James River, across uplands to the coastal plains of the York River. As motorists enjoy the road’s forested stretches and panoramic views, they also traverse America’s early history, as the parkway links the early settlement history at Jamestown with the colonial political history at Williamsburg, and the Revolutionary War story of Yorktown Battlefield.

The Colonial Parkway is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is a designated National Scenic Byway and All-American Road. It likely attracts more attention to the area because of this nationwide exposure.

The park’s emphasis on preserving the viewshed from park areas and the parkway helps maintain the rural, historic feel of the Historic Triangle.

“The Colonial Parkway was designed to unify Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown in its 23 miles. It retains a remarkably high amount of historic integrity, despite its age and daily use.

“In maintaining the road and its forested buffer, we strive to fulfill the 1929 vision of Congressman Louis Crampton, who wanted visitors to be able to drive from site to site ‘without the impression of the early days being driven from his mind by a succession of hot-dog stands and tire signs.’

“The parkway, with its arched bridges, natural vistas, and country-road feeling, is as much a part of the park experience—and the flavor of the Historic Triangle—as the historic settlements and battlefields.”

James Perry

Public Affairs Officer
Colonial National Historical Park

Colonial National Historical Park Supports *Local Jobs and Economic Benefits*



Photo: Dementi Studio

Elizabeth Kostelny

Executive Director
Preservation Virginia

“Preservation Virginia (Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities) acquired 22.5 acres of Jamestown in 1893. Our stewardship there has been propelled into the international spotlight with our archaeological discovery and study of the remains of the 1607 James Fort.

“Preservation Virginia’s partnership with the National Park Service spans more than 70 years, and has leveraged the distinctive strengths of each institution and investments from all sectors to ensure that Jamestown is preserved, studied, and interpreted. Every day, we invite guests to explore the 17th-century beginnings of this nation and be a part of the future preservation of this internationally significant site.”

In 2010, 3.46 million visitors to Colonial National Historical Park spent an estimated \$327 million in the Historic Triangle region. They stayed more than 1.4 million nights in the area’s hotels, and 390,000 nights in local campgrounds.⁷

More than nine out of ten park visitors come from outside the Historic Triangle region. Seven of ten stay overnight in the area, and one quarter are day visitors from out of town. During their stay in the Historic Triangle, travelers are likely to take in several different attractions and activities. A survey of Historic Jamestowne visitors found that the majority stayed three hours or less at the site, but two or more days in the Historic Triangle.⁸

Since the park is one of many tourist draws, only a portion of the expenditures park visitors make during their stay in the area can be specifically linked to the presence of the park. In 2010, approximately \$42.5 million of visitor spending is estimated to be directly attributable to the park.⁹

Colonial Makes a Solid Economic Contribution

This \$42.5 million in visitor spending in 2010 supported 1,184 local jobs—roughly one of every 20 tourist-oriented jobs in the Historic Triangle—\$18.8 million in wages and salaries, and \$51.7 million in sales at local businesses.¹⁰

The park also contributes to the local economy through park employment. In 2009, the latest year for which estimates were available when this report was written, 81 people were employed at the park (year-round and seasonal). Park payroll spending supported 39 additional local jobs, \$6 million in labor income, and \$7.3 million in economic activity.¹¹

Historic Triangle Economic Performance is Solid Despite Strong Reliance on Tourism

Four of the six counties and independent municipalities in the Historic Triangle area were among the top 20 in Virginia for visitor expenditures in 2009. Together all six localities captured nearly eight percent of visitor spending across the state.¹²

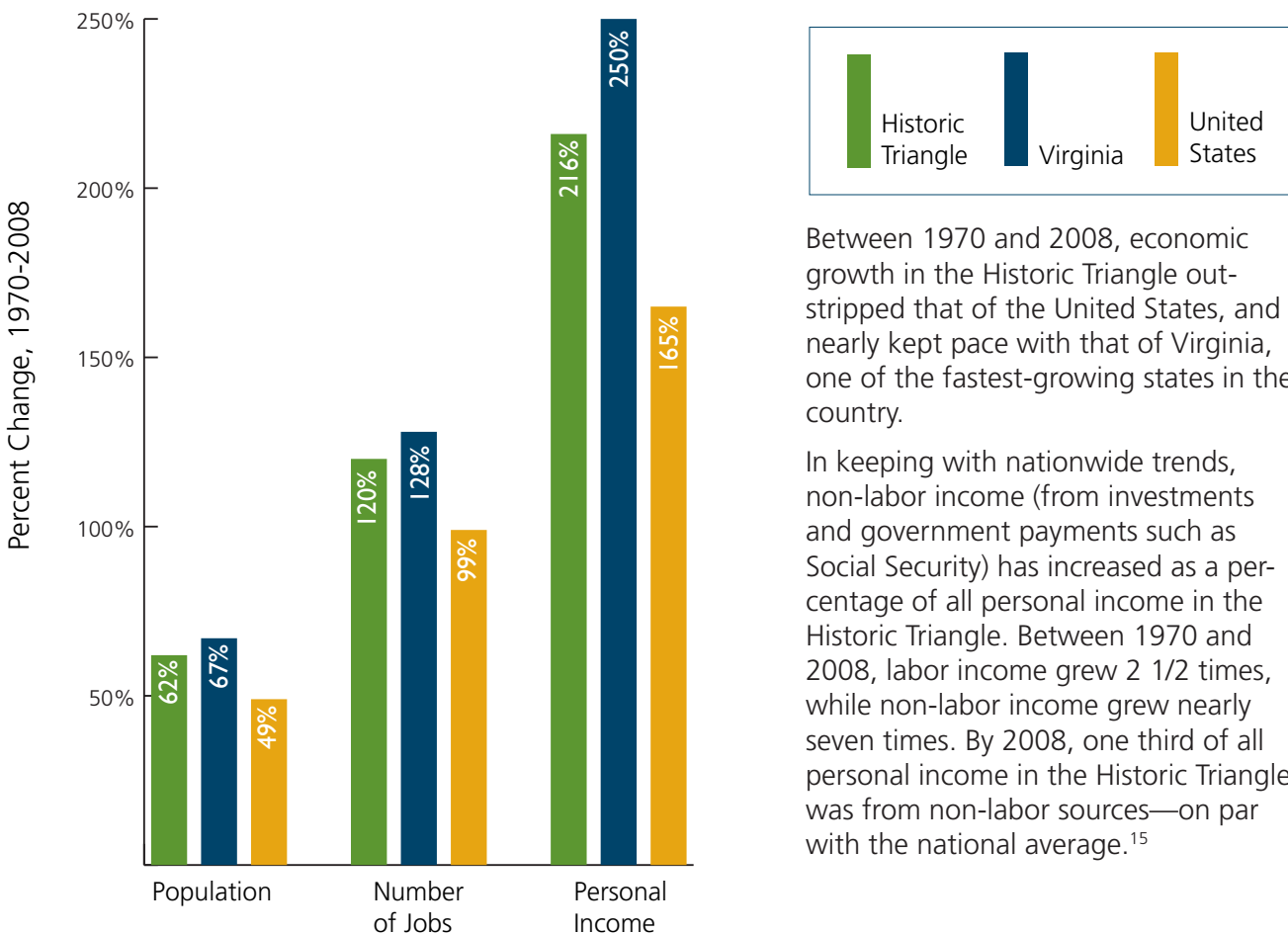
Despite a strong economic concentration in tourism-related industries, often seen as an economic disadvantage, the Historic Triangle has experienced strong growth in employment and personal income, dramatically outstripping population growth (see figure on page 7).

The economy of the Historic Triangle is highly concentrated in businesses related to tourism, hospitality, and retail. Three of the five largest employment sectors in the Historic Triangle in 2009 were related to tourism: accommodation and food services (20.2%), retail trade (13.5%), and arts, entertain-

ment and recreation (8.9%). Those three sectors accounted for more than 42 percent of employment in the Historic Triangle. By comparison, only about 21 percent of jobs in the larger Hampton Roads region and the United States are in these sectors.¹³

During the decade between 1999 and 2009, these sectors have seen solid growth, a big part of the reason that employment in the Historic Triangle grew by 16 percent during that time. Employment in accommodations and food services grew by eight percent, 20 percent in arts, entertainment, and recreation, and 22 percent in retail trade. Reflecting the effects of the recession, the retail and accommodations and food services sectors each lost about five percent of their jobs from mid-2007 to mid-2009. Arts, entertainment and recreation, however, bucked the trend by expanding by five percent.¹⁴

Indicators of Economic Growth in the Historic Triangle: 1970 to 2008



Between 1970 and 2008, economic growth in the Historic Triangle outstripped that of the United States, and nearly kept pace with that of Virginia, one of the fastest-growing states in the country.

In keeping with nationwide trends, non-labor income (from investments and government payments such as Social Security) has increased as a percentage of all personal income in the Historic Triangle. Between 1970 and 2008, labor income grew 2 1/2 times, while non-labor income grew nearly seven times. By 2008, one third of all personal income in the Historic Triangle was from non-labor sources—on par with the national average.¹⁵

Locals and Visitors Enjoy and Support Park Attractions and Landscapes



Locals and visitors cycle along a section of Colonial Parkway that is closed to cars for the annual “Pedal the Parkway” event. In 2011, the event drew an estimated 1,200 riders.

Photo: NPS

In addition to its historical resources, living history demonstrations, and other interpretive programming, Colonial National Historical Park offers open spaces, quiet roads and pathways, and wildlife habitat that are attractive to locals and out-of-town visitors alike. Local families, school groups, and others use the park as a place to learn, play, relax, and enjoy as scenic open space.

The number of local visitors is difficult to estimate. The park is not gated, and visitors can use a variety of entry points without being counted. Many local visits—for example from birding clubs, people walking along park tour roads, bicyclists on the parkway, and passholders who do not stop at the visitor center—are not reflected in park visitation numbers. The park does not routinely collect zip code information from all visitors, so separating local visitors from tourists would be difficult.

Special events attract locals and other visitors to the park. In 2011, the 15th annual “Pedal the Parkway” event, hosted in conjunction with the Williamsburg Area Bicyclists club, drew more than 1,200 participants eager to ride a part of the parkway closed to motorized traffic on a weekend morning. Annual events ranging from the Yorktown Fourth of July celebration to the Achievable Dream half-marathon draw thousands more park visitors.

In 2010, more than 175 park educational programs engaged more than 9,000 students. Local college students intern at the park during the summer, working with park staff such as interpreters, cultural resources staff, and a park curator.



In 2010, more than 1,100 NPS volunteers worked nearly 17,000 hours at the park. Preservation Virginia volunteers worked nearly 9,000 additional hours at Historic Jamestowne. These contributions, worth over \$450,000, are indispensable to the operation of the park.

Visitors stroll to one of the earthen redoubts at Yorktown Battlefield.
Photo: © Natalie Ramirez, National Parks Conservation Association

Colonial National Historical Park Could Help Diversify Tourism in the Region

The Historic Triangle's dominant focus on history gives the region a strong advantage in attracting "cultural travelers." But the fact that the area is so closely identified with colonial history poses challenges as well. The 2005 strategic plan for tourism noted that there is a shortage of options for groups and families that want to stay in the area for multi-day visits, which are unlikely to be entirely history-focused. With limited growth in the cultural travel segment, the strategic plan suggested the region develop a broader identity and base of attractions to appeal to a wider range of travelers.

Reaching Out to Nature Travelers

To complement the region's history and heritage focus, the strategic plan suggested reaching out to nature-based travelers. To do this, the strategic plan recommended taking advantage of the national park environment and its parkway. The plan also suggested capitalizing on water-based recreation opportunities on the James and York rivers.

According to an Outdoor Foundation report, 2008 saw more Americans participating in many forms of nature-based recreation across the country. Backpacking, mountain biking and trail running showed double-digit increases over 2007, with hiking (9 percent) and camping (7 percent) close behind. These increases stand in contrast to stagnant or declining participation in urban recreation activities such as running or bicycling on pavement.¹⁶

In 2006, more than one-third of Virginia residents participated in wildlife watching, joined by some 284,000 nonresidents. That year, wildlife watchers spent \$960 million dollars in Virginia, and approximately 858,000 resident and nonresident anglers spent \$734 million dollars and 9.6 million days fishing Virginia's waters.¹⁷

Developing Recreational Opportunities for Locals and Visitors

Developing natural and outdoor recreation is good for tourism at the same time as it enhances the local quality of life. The Historic Triangle attracts a lot of family travelers, and a variety of activities is a good draw. Nationwide, outdoor recreation is on par with visiting historical sites and museums as an activity for travelers.¹⁸

Local residents benefit also. In the 2006 Virginia Outdoor Survey, 92 percent of Virginians rated access to outdoor recreation opportunities as either "very important" or "important." The two highest outdoor recreation needs indicated were additional public access to Virginia's waters, and walking trails. Next on the priority list: access to natural areas, and trails for bicycling.¹⁹



Jim Noel

York County Director of Economic Development

"Historic Triangle residents are surrounded by natural areas, waterways, and trails. Covering one seventh of York County's land area, Colonial National Historical Park protects a significant amount of our green space. Increasingly, business decisions about where to locate or expand consider access to open space and outdoor recreation.

"Our parks and green spaces can directly support more economic activity if we encourage entrepreneurs to lead hikes, kayaking trips, walking tours, and other activities that draw on our natural and historic heritage. Businesses like these could leverage more economic benefits from our parks, attract visitors, and augment visitor programs that are scratching for funding."

Virginia's Most Popular Outdoor Activities *

72% Walking for pleasure

56% Visiting historic sites

36% Sunbathing/relaxing on a beach

26% Picnicking away from home

24% Jogging or running

20% Freshwater fishing

*Percent of Virginia households surveyed that participate in each activity²¹

The Historic Triangle area is rich in natural recreation opportunities. These could form the basis of a broader draw for tourists that enhances quality of life for area residents and helps maintain the area's historic appeal.

Map: Dan Servian, Direwolf Graphics

Legend

- Colonial NHP
- Public and private conservation lands
- Department of Defense
- Campground
- Boat access
- Wildlife viewing
- Hiking/walking trail (many trails are not depicted because of the map scale)

On the Trail to a Meaningful Economic Impact

Colonial Parkway and Richmond National Battlefield Park are key destinations and anchors on the Virginia Capital Trail. Currently under development, this 50-mile interpretive, recreation and transportation trail will connect the capitol at Richmond to the colonial capitol at Williamsburg. A connecting trail already links Glasshouse Point near Historic Jamestowne with the trail's starting point in Williamsburg. This trail is expected to attract both local use and out-of-town visitors.

Elsewhere in Virginia, a 2004 report estimated that the 34-mile Virginia Creeper Trail supported 27 local jobs and \$610,000 of labor income. Users of the trail, which connects the southwestern Virginia towns of Abingdon and Whitetop Station, spent about \$2.5 million annually on their visits. Visitors quickly began traveling to the area specifically to use the trail.²⁰

The Virginia Capital Trail could be one step in developing a variety of natural and recreational attractions that complement the Historic Triangle's rich heritage resources. Focusing more attention on developing and promoting other natural recreation opportunities in the region could help broaden its appeal in a way that is consistent with preserving its historical roots. The Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, America's first designated national water trail, is another example of this type of recreation development.



Expanding the Benefits of the National Park System: Preserving History and Nature at Fort Monroe

In September 2011, the U.S. Army base at historic Fort Monroe will close. The state of Virginia will take over stewardship of this national historic landmark on the Old Point Comfort Peninsula near Hampton, southeast of the Historic Triangle. This presents a singular opportunity to make Fort Monroe a national park. Preserving the fort's rich history and beautiful beaches would create a world-class destination and a unique community resource.

As a national park, Fort Monroe would tell the story of the beginning and end of slavery in this country. The first Africans in Virginia were landed on the Old Point Comfort Peninsula in 1619, and traded to English settlers for food. Under Union control during the Civil War, the fort became a beacon of hope when three slaves were given refuge there. More than 10,000 African Americans would subsequently escape to "Freedom's Fortress."

Creating a partnership park at Fort Monroe would provide an array of benefits to the Commonwealth of Virginia, including the following:

- Adding to the historic and educational resources in the Historic Triangle with stories spanning four centuries of early explorers and historical figures including Captain John Smith, Chief Black Hawk, Edgar Allan Poe, Harriet Tubman, Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and Abraham Lincoln.
- Highlighting the heroic role of African Americans in slavery's demise.
- Preserving more than two miles of rare undeveloped Chesapeake Bay shoreline, and with it a range of recreational opportunities including birding, wildlife trail hiking, boating, fishing, swimming and camping.
- Encouraging appropriate economic development that would earn revenue for the commonwealth while protecting the historic and natural beauty of the area.
- Creating an anchor attraction in the southeastern part of the Virginia peninsula accessible to the Historic Triangle, which would bring new visitors to the area and encourage travelers to stay longer.



Photo: Dave Norman

Molly Ward

Mayor

Hampton, Virginia

"Having the National Park Service maintain the historical integrity of Fort Monroe and develop natural park settings along the northern beach would create a tremendous asset for this area. Residents and visitors alike would enjoy the beach access and natural areas. The park would further enhance the value of the peninsula for compatible development. It will make a unique campus ideal for a variety of businesses—from a corporate headquarters, think tank or university to high-tech firms or federal contractors."



A national park at Fort Monroe could preserve two miles of rare, undeveloped Chesapeake Bay shoreline.

Photo: © Natalie Ramirez, National Parks Conservation Association

Colonial National Historical Park Could Help The Region Diversify its Economy

“Every study we read and every interview we conducted underscored the central point that we all know intuitively. The quality of life in our area is the major attractor of business. Most of our business owners and workers live in our area, and they share the high value we place on our quality of life. That quality includes a sense of place, our history, our architecture, our green spaces, our recreational opportunities, our amenities that are often only available in larger cities, our rivers, our education opportunities, and so forth.”

Historic Triangle Collaborative
Economic Diversification Task Force

Across the Historic Triangle and the broader Hampton Roads region, a variety of economic diversification efforts are underway. The Historic Triangle Collaborative, an informal group of twelve community leaders, stated its goal for economic diversification quite simply: “We want to achieve a more balanced economy that can exploit new opportunities, while simultaneously strengthening and diversifying the tourism sector.”

Economic Development and Quality of Life

Colonial National Historical Park could help support a broader tourist appeal in the area, and could also be an asset in economic diversification. Amid strategies such as building a business identity for the area and supporting a broader mix of businesses, the 2010 report of the Historic Triangle Collaborative’s economic diversification task force includes this recommendation: *Support actions to protect and enhance community resources such as recreation, culture, arts and entertainment, appearance and the environment to attract and retain businesses and employees.*²²

“Every study we read and every interview we conducted,” the task force report noted, “underscored the central point that we all know intuitively. The quality of life in our area is a major attractor of business.” As the focus of economic development shifts from attracting large employers to developing and supporting small and medium-sized firms and entrepreneurs, quality of life will take on a more central role. The natural character and recreational opportunities of a place are among the key considerations for location among small business owners and employees. According to one study, small business owners ranked nearby parks, open space, and recreation opportunities as the number one factor for choosing a new location.²³

Attracting New Residents

Visitors to the park—and likely to other historical attractions in the area—are better-educated than average, which means that the park is helping attract high-quality potential residents to the area.²⁴ In a phenomenon called “travel-stimulated entrepreneurial migration,” entrepreneurs and business owners sometimes move their businesses to an area after first visiting on pleasure or business travel.

The past two decades have seen steady growth in nonlabor income (see page 7). The growing importance of income from investments and government transfer payments—including Social Security—follows national trends. It may also mean that more and more Historic Triangle residents are able to choose where they want to live because their income is “portable,” such as it is for retirees.

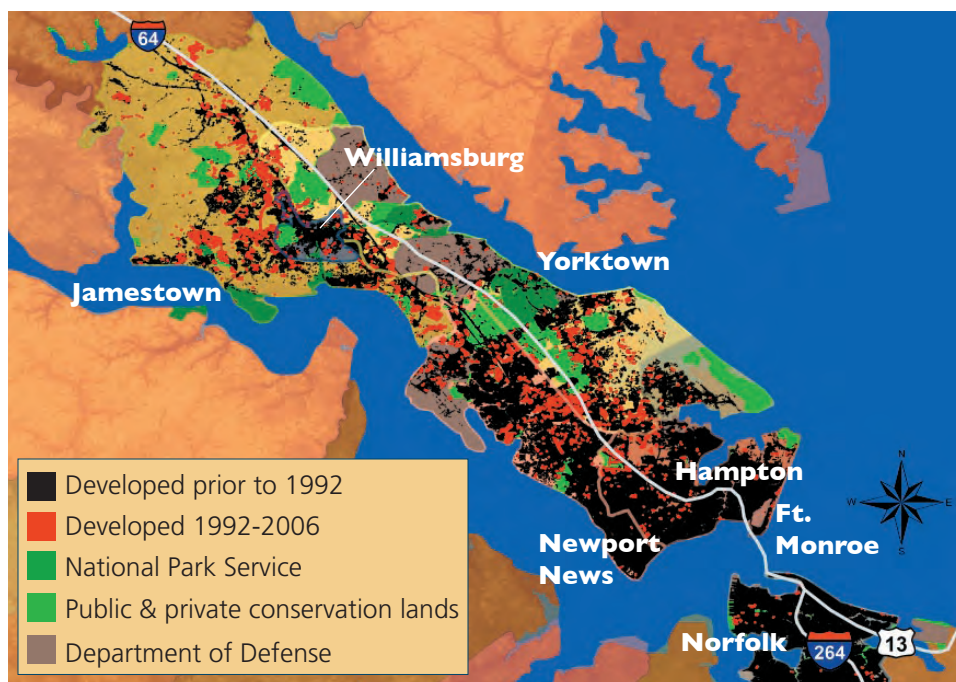
Natural and Recreational Assets Have Demonstrated Value

Focusing on enhancing quality of life for local residents can pay off in financial and fiscal terms, as well. As protected open space, Colonial National Historical Park is a recreational and quality-of-life asset. Across the country, greenways and open space have demonstrated economic value in terms of property values, and quality of life.

In southeastern Pennsylvania, for example, protected open space:

- Adds \$30 million each year to state and local tax revenues from money spent on recreation and other activities;
- Boosts home values by a total of \$16.3 billion (on average, homes are worth \$10,000 more because of access to open space); and
- Generates \$240 million in property tax revenue annually because of higher property values.²⁵

Open Space Under Pressure in Parts of the Region



As this map of developed areas prior to 1992 (black) and after 1992 (red) shows, development on the southern part of the Virginia Peninsula is more dense. However, a high proportion of the development that has happened in the Historic Triangle area has taken place since 1992. Development in James City County has been particularly rapid. One of every four acres used for residential, commercial, or public buildings in the county was developed between 1992 and 2006. In York County, one of seven built acres was developed between 1992 and 2006.

Map: Dan Servian, Direwolf Graphics

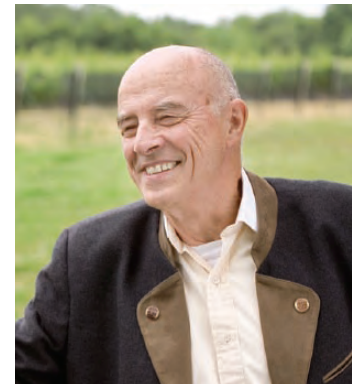


Photo: Williamsburg Winery

Patrick Duffeler

Owner

Williamsburg Winery

"We purchased our 300-acre farm on College Creek overlooking the James River in 1983. With dedication and sweat equity, we have created an internationally recognized winery, a European-style country hotel, a café, a gourmet restaurant, an organic produce garden, and a forested waterfront. The Williamsburg Winery is a tourist destination in its own right; being nestled in the Historic Triangle brings us additional visitors.

"As we celebrate our 25th year of operation, we remain aware of the links among a healthy environment, quality of life, and our business responsibilities. Our visitors come for fine wine, excellent food, and great service, but stay to stroll our nature trails, enjoy quiet surroundings, and breathe clean air. A greater percentage of business operators have embraced the concept of balancing commitments to employees, customers, and financial excellence with a respect for our environment."



Chris Moore

Hampton Roads Scientist
Chesapeake Bay Foundation

“It is clear that Old Dominion Electric Cooperative’s proposed coal-fired power plant poses significant risks to the water quality, air quality, and human health of the region. ODEC continues to contend this power plant will create jobs and prosperity in Surry County while providing energy to the region. However any such apparent benefits would be undercut by the plant’s air pollution and its negative health and economic impacts on our community.”

Protecting Clean Air: A Common Priority

Clean, healthy air should be a priority uniting the park, other natural areas and tourist attractions, local businesses, residents, and economic development leaders. Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC) has proposed building Virginia’s largest coal-fired power plant in Surry County, across the James River from the Historic Triangle. Impacts on health, the environment, and economic development would be felt throughout Hampton Roads.

- The 650-foot smokestacks on the proposed plant would be permitted to release up to 44 pounds of mercury, 921 pounds of lead, 6,800 pounds of benzene, and 2,200 pounds of arsenic each year. Mercury and lead cause brain damage in children. Benzene and arsenic cause cancer.²⁶
- Virginia already ranks sixth in the nation in premature deaths from air pollution. Over the 60-year life of the proposed plant, the release of fine particulates could account for \$12 billion in health care costs and 1,500 additional deaths, about one third in Virginia. In Hampton Roads and Richmond, 160,000 asthmatic children and adults would be especially vulnerable.²⁷
- ODEC proposes siting a fly ash landfill in the floodplain of the Blackwater River, a Norfolk drinking water source. Floods could wash toxic metals and other pollutants into the river, putting citizens and wildlife at risk.²⁸
- Air pollution can become water pollution. Nitrogen oxide settling into the Chesapeake Bay from smokestack emissions could feed low-oxygen dead zones, and mercury from the plant could concentrate in fish and other aquatic life. These impacts raise concerns for an area looking to diversify tourism to include more outdoor and water-based recreation.²⁹
- Emissions from this plant would challenge the region’s ability to meet federal clean air standards. If air quality is unhealthy, Hampton Roads and Richmond could lose \$100 million in federal funds for highway construction, putting a damper on economic growth.³⁰



Preservation Virginia archaeologists construct palisades at Historic Jamestowne. Clear, unspoiled views across the James River contribute to the scenic beauty and historic feel of the park and its neighbors. Photo: © APVA Preservation Virginia

Making Connections, Making Progress

The long history of partnership and collaboration that supports Colonial National Historical Park offers a strong foundation for facing new challenges and taking advantage of new opportunities. How can the Historic Triangle pursue economic vitality while honoring its history and natural heritage?

- Promote opportunities for nature-based recreation and encourage local businesses to serve this market. Coordinate tourism marketing to promote recreation and history as connected experiences. For example, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (www.hallowedground.org) organized its first annual bike tour in 2010 to promote the region's history, beauty, and recreational opportunities.
- Use park facilities to promote outdoor recreation. National parks are key players in the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative (www.americasgreatoutdoors.gov), aimed at connecting Americans with nature. Organize an annual "Get Outdoors—It's Yours" event like the one at San Antonio Missions NHP in Texas. That event, focused on outdoor recreation and cultural heritage, draws local agencies and organizations and thousands of children and adults.
- Protect local quality of life and the tourism industry by stopping construction of the coal-fired power plant proposed by Old Dominion Electric Cooperative. Reduce energy demand through aggressive efficiency programs.
- Support national park proposals and programs. A new national park at Fort Monroe could be an important adjunct to Historic Triangle attractions. Encourage more sites to be part of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake and the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trails, and partners in the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. These NPS initiatives will increase public access throughout the Bay for locals and tourists.
- Use collaborative forums like the Historic Triangle Collaborative (www.historictrianglecollaborative.com) to focus on emerging challenges and opportunities that affect the park and the region. Build on successes to address new issues such as using current institutions to support local business development and entrepreneurship, tourism diversification and marketing, and providing compelling experiences for today's visitors.
- Create a "friends" group for Colonial NHP. Declining budgets have affected all NPS units, putting a premium on volunteer contributions, donations, and partnerships. A friends group could expand the park's capacity for fundraising and promotion, visitor programming, historic preservation, and internship and service learning programs. It could also forge stronger links between the park and neighboring communities.



Photo: James City County

Sanford Wanner Chair Historic Triangle Collaborative

"One of the hallmarks of the Historic Triangle area is collaboration. For all the growth we've seen, we are still a very small networked community. That helps us get things done.

"There is tremendous support for Colonial National Historical Park in this region, and plenty of examples of the park and local groups working together on events, protecting the park's viewshed, and specific projects.

"As new issues and opportunities come up, we can tap our collaborative networks to develop new solutions, make investments, and channel community support. It just takes someone to identify the need and get the ball rolling."

Endnotes

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Other Reports Available

Read the other *Making Connections* reports to learn more about how national parks and their neighbors are working together in Virginia, and the potential ahead. Please visit www.npca.org to view these reports.

Making Connections: Building a Healthy Future for Shenandoah National Park and its Gateway Communities
<http://www.npca.org/mid-atlantic/connections/NPCASHENconnections.pdf>

Making Connections: Linking Outdoor Recreation, Open Space & History at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and Nearby Communities
http://www.npca.org/mid-atlantic/connections/making_connections.pdf

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Credits

On the front cover (from upper left)

- Overpasses along the Colonial Parkway. Millions of visitors drive the Colonial Parkway each year. Hundreds of thousands stop and enjoy other park historical sites, bringing tourist dollars into the region. Photo: NPS
- Captain John Smith statue overlooking the James River at Historic Jamestowne. The statue was commissioned by Preservation Virginia (Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities) and erected on the Jamestown property the association owns and operates within Colonial National Historical Park. Photo: NPS
- Visitors enjoy a living history interpretation at Historic Jamestowne. Photo: NPS

GIS data, p. 10

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries; Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation; campgrounds layer produced by Dan Servian.

GIS data, p. 13

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation; NOAA Coastal Change Analysis Program.



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