# BACKGROUND ON HERITAGE AREA INTERPRETIVE THEMES

**Maryland’s Heritage Areas were created with the concept that interpretive themes are a highly desirable way to coordinate management, and especially marketing, of the heritage tourism elements of the program. “Heritage resources and their interpretation are at the core of the Management Plan. The Plan proposes linking and enriching the diverse sites and resources within the heritage area through an ‘interpretive framework’ comprised of unifying themes supported by new programs and products.”**

**SECTION ONE** -- Interpretive Themes from ALTSCHA Management Plan

The three major Interpretive Themes in ALTSCHA’s Management Plan (2000) were Waterways, Living with the Past, and America’s Roots. Below, the summaries of these themes and their subthemes are listed, with selected “key resources.”

**Waterways** – “Throughout its history, the Annapolis, London Town, and South County Heritage Area has been shaped by its relationship to the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries, including the Severn (a state-designated “Scenic River”), South, and West Rivers. Waterways is a term that embraces the region's geography and ecology, its maritime traditions and recreational sailing, its settlement patterns (including those of Native Americans), water-related crafts and traditions, commerce (including the tobacco economy), consumption, and communication on local, regional, national, and global scales. Sites from the Barge House Museum in Eastport to Herrington Harbor (including several County parks) are encompassed within this theme. It speaks to one of the area's most obvious and pervasive attributes – extended shoreline and water views – while embracing the full sweep of regional history as experienced by all kinds of people, black and white and red.”

Subthemes:

• The Ecology of the Water’s Edge. Key resources: Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Annapolis Recreation and Parks, SERC, Historic London Town and Gardens, City Dock in downtown Annapolis

• Waterborne Commerce and Communication. Key resources: The Annapolis Historic District, Captain Avery Museum, Galesville, Deale, Shady Side, Eastport, Historic Annapolis, Historic London Town and Gardens

• Commerce to Recreation. Key resources: Galesville, Highland Beach, Bay Ridge, Annapolis Harbor, Eastport, Shady Side, Sandy Point State Park, Annapolis Maritime Museum, Deale

• Life on the Water. Key resources: The Naval Academy (guided tours, Visitor’s Center, Museum), Maryland State Archives, City Dock, Historic Annapolis, Captain Avery Museum, Galesville, AAACCVB Visitor’s Center, Deale, Shady Side

**Living with the Past** – “The heritage area is a living landscape, neither fixed in time or meaning. The story of how the presence of the past informs life in the present engages some key ideas, i.e.:

* History is a dynamic relationship between past and present (expressed in sites throughout the heritage area).
* The relationship between people and place is continuously evolving.
* There are many ways to recover, restore, preserve, and celebrate the past.
* Scenes of historical significance, such as the Maryland State House, are still important today.

The theme of living with the past invites area residents as well as tourists and school children to see history as an open-ended story in which people make history and in which many diverse experiences and viewpoints are at play.”

Subthemes:

• Living Landmarks. Key resources: Historic Annapolis, historic churches within the heritage area, Maryland State House, Historic London Town and Gardens, Hammond-Harwood House, Chase-Lloyd House, Naval Academy, Maryland State Archives

• Preserving the Past. Key resources: the Wilson House restoration in Galesville, ongoing archaeological digs and archives, Captain Avery Museum, Charles Carroll House, Historic Annapolis, Hammond-Harwood House, Historic London Town and Gardens

• The Re-Usable Past. Key resources: Banneker-Douglass Museum, Historic Annapolis, various properties in Eastport

• Artists, Architects, and Artisans. Key resources: Annapolis City Plan, Historic Annapolis (William Paca House), Charles Carroll House, Chase-Lloyd House, Historic London Town and Gardens (William Brown House), National Register properties in the heritage area, Hammond-Harwood House, Naval Academy, Maryland State House

**America’s Roots** – “The heritage area is, in many ways, a model on which America as a nation has been patterned. From its early colonization the region was committed to a market economy, to global commerce, and to individual enterprise. For European settlers the area was an open society in which individuals could accumulate resources, rise in status, and attain prominence based on merit and achievement, exemplified, for example, in the four major historic house museums in Annapolis and in numerous National Register properties throughout the County. For African-Americans, the region is a case study in adaptation, survival, and cultural resilience as indicated in the Frederick Douglass House, the Maynard-Burgess House, and the Banneker-Douglass Museum. This theme also embraces the important state and national events associated with the American Revolution, the Civil War, and other key events. Most important, the overall theme helps visitors and residents to explore what was distinct and significant about the regional experience, to discover how it was different from other areas, and to understand how the region has changed over time.”

Subthemes:

• A Revolutionary Time. Key resources: Charles Carroll House, Chase-Lloyd House, Hammond Harwood House, Maryland State Archives, Maryland State House, Historic Annapolis (William Paca House), St. John’s College

• War and Peace. Key resources: Maryland State Archives, Maryland State House, Naval Academy, Galesville, Deale, Eastport (WWII history)

• African Americans in Anne Arundel. Key resources: African American Heritage in Annapolis, Annapolis Historic District, Asbury Methodist Church, Banneker-Douglass Museum, Galesville, Historic Annapolis, Charles Carroll House, Hammond-Harwood House, Highland Beach, Kunta Kinte - Alex Haley Memorial Site at City Dock, Maryland State Archives, Maryland State House, Naval Academy

**SECTION TWO** – Interpretive Themes Developed by Consultant for Interpretive Plan and Brochure (2006)

**Discover Four Rivers: A History Explorer’s Map to the Heritage Area of Annapolis, London Town & South County**

Welcome to the Four Rivers Heritage Area. Along our shores, city streets, and county byways and within our historic houses and museums you will discover a rich and diverse history. Use this map to explore the stories of plantation owners and enslaved people, farmers and watermen, politicians and merchants, sailors and artisans who shaped a past that we all share. Five thematic “trails” are indicated by color-coded sites throughout the heritage area.

**Heritage Trails – Five Themes:**

**1. Annapolis’ “Golden Age”**

Annapolis enjoyed what’s been called a “golden age” from the late 1750s to 1776. The town was described by Jonathan Boucher, rector of St. Anne’s Church, as the “genteelest town in North America.” The city serves both as the county seat and as Maryland’s capital. Today, as you walk the streets of Annapolis and explore its historic buildings, the voices of its diverse and multilayered heritage can still be heard.

1. **Four Rivers and the Bay**

William Wirt captured an enduring scene when he wrote in 1822 of a “broad bay animated with vessels in full sail.” The confluence of the Chesapeake Bay to the east and the area’s numerous creeks and four rivers – Severn, South, Rhode, and West – defined the area’s natural and man-made landscape and shaped the lives of those who settled along its shores.

1. **Life on the Land**

The area’s waterways have shaped the contours of the land, but it is in the loamy soil that the stories of those who lived here are best revealed. Indians first foraged for berries in the dense woods and shot venison and turkey to supplement their diets. By the mid-17th century, the English were creating plantations along the shore, smaller farms were settled inland, and tobacco was the economic mainstay. Today, though tobacco has given way to wheat and corn in South County fields, historic structures bear witness to a rich life on the land and horses still gallop across gentle uplands.

1. **African-American Heritage**

As early as the mid-1600s, the institution of slavery was a growing economic, social, and cultural force in Maryland and other colonies. Slave-trading merchants reaped substantial profits from the slave trade. In the South, plantation owners relied upon the labor of enslaved people for their livelihood. Slavery and its legacy, including racism, have shaped our area’s heritage for over 300 years.

1. **Sacred Places**

In 1632, King Charles I granted a charter for the Maryland colony to Cecil Calvert, a Roman Catholic. Protestants and Catholics left behind a land of religious persecution in pursuit of what Calvert described as “unity and peace.” Maryland’s Toleration Act of 1649 was based on this foundation. The area’s churches, synagogues, meeting halls, and graveyards reveal the roots of this story and the growth of diverse religious faiths in Maryland.

Note: These did not officially replace the Interpretive Themes in Section 3 of the ALTSCHA Management Plan, which was approved by MHAA.

**SECTION THREE** -- Suggested New Interpretive Themes Related to Boundary Amendment (from Boundary Amendment Application Document (2021)

The new areas that are part of the Boundary Amendment are related to these themes:

**➢ Rail-to-Trail Recreation:** Both a land-based version (as opposed to the Waterways theme) of Commerce to Recreation, and also The Re-Usable Past fit the Rail-to-Trail Recreational Trails of the Boundary Amendment. It should be noted that recreational bike trails were specifically called out in the Summary of the original Management Plan of 2000: “Bicycle Improvements: As the only location where two national trail systems – the East Coast Greenway from Maine to Florida and the American Discovery Trail from California to Delaware – will intersect, the Annapolis, London Town, and South County Heritage Area offers great potential for bicycling to be part of the heritage tourism experience. The highest priority bicycle improvement is to establish continuous on-street bike lanes from the Severn River Bridge to the new Visitors Center. (Bike lanes are currently in place that connect the heavily used Baltimore and Annapolis Hiking and Biking Trail with the Severn River Bridge.) In addition, planning for roadway improvements to Rowe Boulevard should incorporate bike paths as part of a strategy of developing an area-wide bicycle network. Map/guide information regarding bicycle touring should be developed for distribution at the Visitors Center as the bicycle “hub” of the heritage area.” [Summary, p. vi; note that the “New Visitors Center” was never pursued, due to opposition from the Annapolis City Council. Also, Action Plan, 4.1.4, “Moving About the Heritage Area.”]

**➢ Native American Heritage:** While Native American heritage was mentioned only in passing in the Management Plan (2000), probably from a motivation to protect that heritage, it has been the intention of ALTSCHA’s Board of Directors for several years to correct what now seems like an insulting omission. A new interpretive theme that is inclusive of this important part of this area’s past is a priority, and this will be restated in ALTSCHA’s forthcoming Five-Year Plan. The Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary Complex is an ideal place to share the Native American story with heritage visitors, as it is now recognized as a highly significant and rare archaeological asset. Within a surprisingly small area, there are deeply stratified and relatively untouched archaeological sites representing 12,000 years of human occupation. Dozens of unique archaeological sites have been recorded and studied in the sanctuary and its partner properties, including the Glendening Nature Preserve and the Nature Preserve at Wayson’s Corner. These sites have yielded stone tools, decorative pottery, finely honed projectile points, and evidence of subsistence, trade, and even ancient social structures. The study of these sites provides a small but highly significant window into the rich Native American presence that dominated this area for millennia before Europeans arrived. While providing an important part of the Native American narrative, sites along the Patuxent River need to be understood in relationship to other Native American sites across the county. The densely packed heritage sites in and around Jug Bay, and along the Patuxent River, provide exciting potential for visitors, students, and citizens to explore the legacy and places where Native Americans lived for some 12,000 years. In cooperation with Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary staff, there are several well-established public-private partnerships with the County’s Cultural Resources Division, the non-profit Lost Towns Project, and most recently, with Washington College. Sites such as the Benson-Hammond House and Kuethe Library offer additional public venues for interpretation and exhibition of prehistoric artifacts, adding another means by which visitors can engage with Anne Arundel County’s Native American heritage [Source: EBFRHA].

A selected list of sites related to Native American Heritage includes:

* Bacon Ridge Natural Area
* Benson-Hammond House
* Fort Smallwood Park
* Glendening Nature Preserve -- Dorr Prehistoric Site, Plummer Farm Complex
* Hancock’s Resolution
* Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary
* Kinder Farm Park
* Kuethe Library
* Nature Preserve at Wayson’s Corner
* Patuxent Wetlands Park
* Pig Point Archaeological Site
* Jug Bay Farm Preserve (Riggleman Farm)
* Waterworks Park

**➢ Natural Resource Experiences** – Four Rivers Heritage Area defines “heritage” as historical, cultural, and natural resources. This theme has come to be even more important in recent years, and especially now that the burden of living with COVID-19 has driven many people to seek outdoor experiences. This larger theme is consistent with ALTSCHA’s original interpretive themes of The Ecology of the Water’s Edge and Life on the Water. A selected list of sites related to Natural Resource Experiences includes:

* Jug Bay Cluster (All)
* Mid-County Cluster (All)
* B&A Trail
* Downs Park
* Fort Smallwood Park
* Hancock’s Resolution
* Kinder Farm Park

**➢ Railroad Heritage** – This theme, which was brought to the fore in the Study, is a new emphasis, but it relates to the original themes of Living Past – Living Landmarks and Preserving the Past, as well as The Re-Usable Past and Commerce to Recreation (Land based version). A selected list of sites relating to this theme includes:

* + B&A Trail
  + Bacon Ridge Natural Area
  + Belvoir (Scott’s Plantation)
  + Benson-Hammond House
  + BWI Trail Loop
  + Chesapeake Beach Railway Railbed
  + Child’s Residence
  + South Shore Trail Headquarters
  + Citizens State Bank (Odenton)
  + Crownsville State Hospital and Cemetery
  + Earleigh Heights Station
  + Jug Bay Farm Preserve (Riggleman Farm) -- Same parcel as Pindell Station Stationmaster’s House
  + Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary
  + Kinder Farm Park
  + Kuethe Library
  + Odenton Historic District
  + Odenton MARC Ticket Office - Pennsylvania RR Station Office
  + Old Bethel Church (Odenton)
  + Old Masonic Hall (Lodge 209)
  + Odenton Heritage Center
  + Rising Sun Inn
  + Severna Park B & A Power Station
  + Severna Park Station
  + South Shore Trail
  + St. Paul’s Anglican Church
  + Waterworks Park (Annapolis Water Company)

**➢ While not a new theme, the theme of African American** **Heritage** is amplified with the addition of many new sites relating to that theme. A selected list includes:

* + Bacon Ridge Natural Area
  + Belvoir (Scott’s Plantation)
  + Benson-Hammond House
  + Crownsville State Hospital and Cemetery
  + Fort Smallwood Park
  + Freetown Historic District
  + Freetown Rosenwald School
  + Generals Highway Corridor Park
  + Goshen Farm
  + Hall United Methodist Church, Cemetery, and Stone Altar (Adjacent Marley Neck Rosenwald School)
  + Hancock’s Resolution
  + Harmans Rosenwald School
  + Jug Bay Farm Preserve (Riggleman Farm) - Same parcel as Pindell Station Stationmaster’s House
  + Kuethe Library
  + Linthicum Walks
  + Mount Tabor Methodist Episcopal Church
  + Mt. Tabor Good Samaritan Lodge #59 and Cemetery
  + Mount Zion United Methodist Church-Magothy and Cemetery
  + Odenton Local Historic District
  + Pumphrey Community
  + Lloyd Keaser Center and former location of Pumphrey Rosenwald School
  + Queenstown Rosenwald School
  + Ridge Methodist Church
  + Rising Sun Inn
  + South Shore Trail
  + Whites Hall (Johns Hopkins Birthplace)

**SECTION FOUR** -- Sites in the Boundary Amendment mentioned in original Management Plan (2000). Selected sites in Anne Arundel County mentioned in “Interpretive Linkages Beyond the Heritage Area” [pp. 27-30]:

Waterways – The Ecology of the Water's Edge

* + Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary

Living Past – Living Landmarks

* + B&A Trail Ranger Station
  + Kinder Farm Park

Living Past – Re-usable Past

* + Rising Sun Inn

Living Past – Preserving the Past

* + Annearrundell County Free School
  + Benson-Hammond House
  + Hancock’s Resolution
  + Rising Sun Inn

America’s Roots – War and Peace

* + Historical Electronics Museum (Now the National Electronics Museum)