

Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium
“Where Time & Tide Meet”

Frequently Asksed Questions

Our Mission: The mission of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium (SMHAC) is to enhance the economic activity of Southern Maryland through combining quality heritage tourism and small business development with preservation, cultural & natural resource conservation and education.

To contact us, email: SoMdHeritage@tccsmd.org or phone: 301-274-4083.

Question: What’s a Heritage Area?

Answer: Strictly speaking, a Heritage Area is a geographic location where important historic, cultural, natural and recreational resources are to be found. However, beyond that definition lies a richness of experience, education, conservation and economic development. All of these are the result of the appreciation and promotion of our living heritage. Our Heritage Area is a combination of historic sites and properties, small museums, recreational areas, the agricultural bedrock of our history along with the natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its contributory waterways.

Question: What is meant by “Certified Heritage Area?”

Answer: In an effort to gain recognition from the state of Maryland and to have access to funding and support, Southern Maryland defined its boundaries and targeted areas of special interest. Also, we have created a Management Plan that outlines our goals and many of the specific projects we hope to accomplish in order to better promote our area locally and as a tourist destination. Our Management Plan was submitted to, and reviewed by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. Once they had accepted our Plan, we became a Certified Heritage Area in 2003.

Question: What locations comprise the Southern Maryland Heritage Area?

Answer: The Southern Maryland Heritage Area consists of large portions of Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s Counties, and it lies entirely within the Atlantic Coastal Plain and is bounded by the Chesapeake Bay on the east and by the Potomac River on the west and south. The land area covers over 1,100 square miles and some 150 square miles of water further extend the physical boundaries. Specific areas that are targeted as key investment zones are: portions of the towns of Chesapeake Beach and North Beach, portions of Solomon’s, the towns of Indian Head and Port Tobacco, Friendship Farm Park in Nanjemoy, portions of the Town of

Leonardtown, Piney Point/St. George's Island, portions of St. Mary's College and Historic St. Mary's City.

Question: What is a Consortium and who belongs to this one?

Answer: A consortium is an affiliation of people and organizations with a common goal. In this case, local governments, offices of tourism and economic development, museums and historical sites, as well as private companies are all part of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium.

Question: What is the purpose of this consortium?

Answer: Our primary responsibility is to implement the Management Plan we created. In this way, we will unify the needs and advance the goals of preservation, conservation and tourism in the targeted areas of the three counties. We have a long list of projects on our "to do" list, some of these we will see through to completion on our own, for many others we will help direct funding and support to other groups and individuals. For more information on the Heritage Area and its projects, go to our web site and click on the link to our Management Plan.

Question: How will the Heritage Area Consortium help Southern Maryland?

Answer: We'll help implement the application and approval of state funded grants for up to 50% of the cost of capital and non-capital projects that support our mission. Projects throughout the Area can benefit from these grants of up to \$100,000. Additionally, we've already created our own Mini-Grant Program and in the first year this program awarded cash funds to five organizations that needed a helping hand. We have established an open file of funding resources for the support of our Heritage Area partners.

Question: How is the Heritage Area managed?

Answer: The Southern Maryland Heritage Area, established in 2003 by the authority of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, has an Executive Director, who reports to the Board of Directors of the SMHAC. The Consortium was created under the leadership of the Southern Maryland Travel and Tourism Committee as a partnership forum with non-profit corporation status through the involvement of the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland. Our Consortium Board's members come from local museums, arts & preservation organizations, parks and recreations, colleges, governments, planning and zoning programs and local businesses.

Question: Can the Consortium help me with my project?

Answer: In order to receive financial support through us, you must be a non-profit organization or an individual in partnership with a non-profit, or a government entity. Your project must fall within our guidelines and in some way further our mutual goals. Of course, you must be working inside the boundaries of the Certified Heritage Area.

Question: How can I apply for funding?

Answer: Call 301-274-4083 or email us at SoMdHeritage@tccsmd.org for information, guidelines and applications for all funding programs. We also maintain an extensive file of other funding opportunities, so call or email for access to that information too.

Question: How can I join in and help out?

Answer: In any of several ways: You can become a member and receive our newsletter by paying a small annual fee. You can become a Friend of Southern Maryland Heritage by making a donation or by contributing a matching gift. Or you can donate your own time by joining our network of volunteers. To do any of these, contact us at the above phone or email.

Question: Where can I find more information about things to do in the Southern Maryland Heritage Area?

Answer: On our website: www.southernmdisfun.com