Preservation and Partners:

A History of Piscataway Park

Janet A. McDonnell, PhD

December 2020

Resource Stewardship and Science, National Capital Area, National Park Service
and Organization of American Historians

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
PISCATAWAY NATIONAL PARK ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY
1/5/2021

Prepared by:

Janet A. McDonnell, PhD

Recommended by:

Noel Lopez Date: 01/05/21

Dr. Noel Lopez, NCA Cultural Anthropologist

Concurred by:

Joshua M Date: 1/8/21

Dr. Joshua Torres, NCA Supervisor of History and Culture Programs

Approved by:

Michael Commisso Date: 1/6/2021

Michael Commisso, Piscataway National Park Acting Superintendent

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the early republic period of American history, President George Washington was the most renowned resident of the Potomac River valley. His sprawling Mount Vernon estate sat on a hill directly across the Potomac River from the 17th century Marshall Hall estate in Maryland. There is ample evidence that Washington and his guests enjoyed and very much appreciated the stunning view. Many years later preserving this view would become the major impetus for establishing what we know today as Piscataway Park (PISC), a few miles south of Washington, DC.

These lands along the Maryland shore of Potomac River were actively cultivated during George Washington's time, and the existing park setting, which includes agricultural lands and open spaces interspersed with forests and wetlands, closely approximates that historic scene. The National Park Service's (NPS) primary goal and responsibility in managing the park has been, and continues to be, preserving this historic scene of open fields and wooded areas and ensuring that it does not authorize any landscape alterations except those that would restore previously undisturbed sites, reduce visual intrusions, or maintain open fields. The NPS continues to take into account the slope and orientation of the terrain and the tree cover when considering the location of any new facilities.

Piscataway Park and its associated lands are for the most part held under scenic easements and constitute a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) historic district made up of nearly 5,000 acres of meadow, woodland, and wetland, along six miles of the Potomac River shoreline from the head of Piscataway Creek to the historic Marshall Hall in Maryland's Prince George's and Charles counties. The northern border of the historic district crosses Piscataway Creek, a tidal tributary that enters the Potomac River at Fort Washington, and includes the Fort Washington Marina as well as adjacent lands to the northeast of the marina.

A community of private property owners living in what is called the Moyaone Reserve occupy a good portion of the park. The origins of that community date back to the 1920s when Alice and Henry Ferguson and a small group of Washington, DC, residents were attracted to the Potomac shoreline in Maryland's Accokeek area. These local residents mobilized after World War II to preserve the rustic environment that they had come to appreciate and helped launch the movement leading to the creation of Piscataway

[Cover Image: A wetland view of Piscataway Park, NPS]

Park. In the 1950s these Moyaone Reserve residents established the current Moyaone Association and joined forces with the newly formed Alice Ferguson Foundation and the Accokeek Foundation, along with the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association (MVLA) to preserve the natural environment they valued and to preserve the viewshed from Mount Vernon.

Over time, the NPS became more deeply involved working with these various organizations and with Congress to achieve their shared goals of creating a national park. Preservation of the historic view has depended to a great extent on effective cooperation and communication between the NPS and the park's partners and stakeholders and continues to do so.

Although President John F. Kennedy signed legislation formally authorizing the park in October 1961, the struggle to secure appropriations for the park, to acquire the additional lands within the Mount Vernon viewshed and to secure scenic easements from local property owners continued. The park was established through the conveyance of scenic easements by private landholders and the purchase of land in fee. These scenic easements were legally binding agreements between landowners and the easement holder (in this case the Department of the Interior) that restricted development and use of the land to achieve conservation goals.

Meanwhile, during the early 1960s the Department of the Interior signed cooperative agreements with both the Accokeek Foundation and the Alice Ferguson Foundation defining their respective roles and responsibilities in the park and their relationship with the NPS. These critical agreements were updated over the years and continue to play a major role in the park's management, development, and operations. By the late 1960s, the NPS had made significant progress in preserving the park's cultural and natural resources. For example, one of the park's most significant archeological resources, the Accokeek Creek Site, was added to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1966 and is a National Historic Landmark.

The 1970s and 1980s proved to be a period of expansion for Piscataway Park. On October 15, 1974, President Gerald Ford signed P.L. 93-444 adding 625 acres to the park, to include the Marshall Hall Amusement Park and adjacent Charles County lands, as well as the eight-acre Fort Washington Marina. The period was also a time for developing and refining additional measures to protect the park's rich cultural resources. In 1979 the entire park was added to the NRHP, marking a key milestone in its history and reinforcing the importance of its preservation mission.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the NPS further refined its relationships with its various partners and stakeholders. It turned more attention to the management and development of the Accokeek Foundation's National Colonial Farm along the Maryland shore of the Potomac at the end of Bryan Point Road in the park, conducting an environmental assessment and preparing a development concept plan. The NPS also took a major step in refining and clarifying its role in managing the park by adopting a General Management Plan (GMP) in 1983, and continued documenting the rich archeological resources in the park. The presence of the Piscataway Indians in the park and their involvement with the NPS and other park partners increased. In an unprecedented step Congress passed legislation in 1979 allowing Piscataway Chief Turkey Tayac to be buried inside the park on fee land (Federal Property).

In recent decades the park continued to deal with a variety of threats to its natural and cultural resources and worked to improve the visitor experience. There was a growing environmental focus, shoreline restoration, boardwalk construction, facility improvements, and other measures to enhance the visitor experience.

Piscataway Park is unique in a number of ways, adding to its value and significance. There is no direct precedent for what has been done at Piscataway Park. It remains the only national park unit that was created and exists for the scenic protection of a non-federal property, specifically Mount Vernon. In addition, while it does not represent the first use of scenic easements, it was one of the first national park units to use them so extensively. Indeed, the park has served as a model in this regard, and those scenic easements will continue to play a critical role in the park's future. Inside the park, the NPS works to preserve what are recognized as some of the most significant archeological resources on the Eastern Seaboard.

In addition, Piscataway Park has come to demonstrate a value well beyond its original mission of preserving the Mount Vernon and Fort Washington viewsheds. Its role in preserving important natural and cultural resources has grown and become increasingly important. This includes its role in preserving the park's rich archeological resources and its preservation and interpretation of American Indian heritage. The park's story also provides valuable insight into the challenges of maintaining effective partnerships and the importance of civic engagement. Piscataway Park's history is complex, as are the relationships among the park's various partners and stakeholders, particularly as these private organizations each have their own missions, goals, and priorities and have developed their own plans for the limited development of park resources. The partnerships and the scenic easements have presented

both opportunities and challenges. Yet for all the complexities and challenges, the value of Piscataway Park to those who live there and to those who visit continues to resonate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This history could not have been written without the ongoing support and cooperation of various National Park Service managers and staff, representatives of the various Piscataway Park's partner organizations, and fellow historians. National Capital Regional Historian Dean Herrin and Aidan Smith of the Organization of American Historians shaped this project and provided oversight from its beginning. Kate Birmingham in National Capital Parks – East made available important office files and reports. Herrin and several members of the National Capital Parks – East staff spent considerable time reviewing drafts of this history and sharing their recommendations. Piscataway Park's superintendent, Christine Smith, made herself available to provide guidance and share her perspective. Former National Capital Region archeologist Stephen Potter was also gracious with his time and expertise.

I am particularly indebted to those individuals who were willing to take the time to be interviewed and share their unique and valuable perspectives. One of these interviewees, Holliday Wagner, shared not only her thoughts and recollections but also a collection of documents and personal papers that she had carefully collected and preserved for decades. A final thank you goes to NPS historian John Sprinkle, Jr., who graciously shared his own research on Piscataway Park and provided support throughout the project.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary 2

Acknowledgements 6

Contents 7

List of Illustrations 9

Glossary 10

CHAPTER 1: Setting the Stage . 11

George Washington's Mount Vernon View 11
Park Setting 12
Paleo-Indian Hunting and Gathering (10,500 B.C. – 8000 B.C.) 14
Archaic Period (ca. 8000 B.C. – 1300 B.C.) 15
Woodland Period (ca.1300 B.C. – 1608 A.D.) 17
European Contact (1608 – 1691) 21
Colonial Settlement and the Republic Period 26
Marshall Hall 29
Mid to Late Nineteenth Century 31
The Agrarian Ideal, 1920s/1930s 32

Key Figures 1950s and 1960s 36

CHAPTER 2: Stewards and Stakeholders: Organizing for Preservation: 1945 – 1960 37

Henry G. and Alice L. L. Ferguson and Post War Suburban Development 37
Moyaone Reserve and Association 39
Alice Ferguson Foundation Established 42
Mount Vernon Ladies' Association Role 45
Accokeek Foundation Created 50
National Park Service Involvement 54
Accokeek Foundation Early Activities 61
National Colonial Farm 63
Conclusion 67

CHAPTER 3: Struggle for the Establishment of Piscataway Park: 1960 - 1970 69

Developing Threats and Stakeholder Response 69
Park Authorization and Development 73
Potomac River Conservation 85
Cooperative Agreements with the Accokeek and Alice Ferguson Foundations 88
Funding Piscataway Park 92
Accokeek Foundation Early Years 99

Scenic Easements and Taxes 100
Conclusion 107

CHAPTER 4: Refining and Expanding the Park: 1970s and 1980s 109

Marshall Hall 110
Marshall Hall Amusement Park 118
Buddy Bladen House 119
National Colonial Farm 120
Study/Action Plan (1979) 121
Environmental Assessment for a Development Concept Plan for National Colonial Farm 125
National Colonial Farm/Grant to Accokeek Foundation (1983) 129
National Colonial Farm/Laurel Branch Reconstruction 130
Park Management, Operations, and Interpretation 132
General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment, 1983 132
Interpretation 138
American Indian Cultural Revival/ Chief Turkey Tayac Interment 140
Archeological Survey (1981) 144

CHAPTER 5: Park Development and Transition: 1990 – 2016 150

Park Expansion 150
Park Operations and Management 151
Cooperative Agreements Update 156
Potomac River Conservation 159
Developments at National Colonial Farm 161
Ecosystem Farm 166
Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail 168
Interpretation/Piscataway Cultural Landscape Initiative 169
Environmental Assessment (2009) 173
Environmental Assessment (2012) 175
Preservation and Protection of Cultural and Natural Resources 179
Visitor Use and Experience 183
Challenges Ahead 185

Appendices

1. Timeline 191
2. Key Legislation 193
3. National Capital Parks – East Superintendents 194

Bibliography 195

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. View of Marshall Hall, c.1900*. (Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association)*, page 29
2. This image from a Christmas card sent by Rep. Frances Bolton highlights the historic view of the park across the river from Mount Vernon *(Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association)*, page 46
3. U.S. Representative Frances Bolton and Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall at the Piscataway Park dedication ceremony, February 22, 1968. (NPS), page 98
4. From left to right, Frances Bolton, Chief Turkey Tayac, Belva Jensen, Robert Ware Straus, Rosamond Bierne, Gladys Spellman, and Hervey Machen, at the Piscataway Park dedication ceremony, February 22, 1968. (NPS), page 98

GLOSSARY

AF	Accokeek Foundation
AFF	Alice Ferguson Foundation
ASMIS	Archeological Sites Management Information System
DCP	Development Concept Plan
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
EA	Environmental Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FY	Fiscal Year
GMP	General Management Plan
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MVLA	Mount Vernon Ladies' Association
NACE/NCP-E	National Capital Parks East
NCR	National Capital Region
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPS	National Park Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
PISC	Piscataway Park
PMIS	Project Management Information System
WASO	Washington Area Support Office
WSSC	Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE STAGE

George Washington's Mount Vernon View

During the early republic period of American history, President George Washington was the most renowned resident of the Potomac River valley. His sprawling Mount Vernon estate sat on a hill directly across the Potomac River from the 17th century Marshall Hall estate in Maryland. There is ample evidence that Washington and his guests enjoyed and appreciated the stunning view they had from the two-story piazza that Washington added during a major renovation of the main house on the estate in 1774. Many years later preserving this view would become the major impetus in establishing what we know today as Piscataway Park (PISC). Many of Washington's contemporaries commented on the beautiful setting of the estate and the view of the Potomac. When writer Isaac Weld visited Mount Vernon in the mid-1790s, he wrote, "The Maryland shore, on the opposite side, is beautifully diversified with hills, which are almost covered with woods; in many places, however, little patches of cultivated ground appear, ornamented with houses. The scenery altogether is most delightful."[1]

Writing about Mount Vernon in 1793, George Washington said, "No estate in America is more pleasantly situated than this."[2] His visitors shared this sentiment. American architect Benjamin H. Latrobe (1764-1820) created a watercolor of the scene, writing "Toward the east nature has lavished magnificence."[3] Two years later, Julian Niemcewicz wrote, "It is from there [the portico] that one looks out on perhaps the most beautiful view in the world … It is there that in the afternoon and evening the GW, his family and the guests go to sit and enjoy the fine weather and beautiful view. The opposite bank, the course of the river, the dense woods all combined to enhance the sweet illusion. What a remembrance!"[4] The significance of Piscataway Park's natural landscape has been at the core of efforts to preserve that land for many decades and ultimately resulted in its designation as a unit of the National Park System. The view that Washington's guests admired and referenced so many years ago would later become a major

---

[1] Weld, Isaac, "Letter V, Mt. Vernon," *Travels through the states of North America, and the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, during the years 1795, 1796, and 1797.* 1799, 92.
[2] Washington, George. "Letter to Arthur Young, December 12th, 1793" Washington Papers National Archives
[3] Latrobe, H. Benjamin. "Chapter Three: Visit to Washington" *The Journal of Latrobe.* 1905, 92.
[4] Niemcewicz, U. Julian, *Under Their Vine and Fig Tree: Travels through America in 1797-1799, 1805 with Some Further Account of Life in New Jersey.* Trans. By Metchie Budka, 1965.

focal point of the movement to preserve the western shore of Maryland from urban development after World War II.

Lands along the Potomac River were actively cultivated during George Washington's time, and the existing park setting, which includes agricultural lands and open spaces interspersed with forests and wetlands, closely approximates that historic scene. The goal of park management has been, and continues to be, to retain this historic scene of open fields and wooded areas and ensure that the National Park Service (NPS) does not authorize any landscape alterations except those that would restore previously undisturbed sites, reduce visual intrusions, or maintain open fields. The NPS continues to take into account the slope and orientation of the terrain and the tree cover when considering the location of any new facilities. Preservation of the historic view has for decades relied on the steady cooperation of the park's partners and stakeholders and will continue to do so.[5]

Park Setting

Piscataway Park lies approximately ten miles south of Washington, DC, within two Maryland counties. The eastern three-quarters of the park falls within Prince George's County and the western quarter in Charles County. The primary regional access to the park is along Maryland Route 210, a major thoroughfare known as Indian Head Highway. The eastern end of the park can be reached from Farmington and Wharf roads, two meandering local roads. Bryan Point Road provides access to the central portion of the park near Bryan Point. The western end of the park is accessible from Marshall Hall Road (Maryland Route 227).

Piscataway Park and its associated lands are for the most part held under scenic easements and constitute a National Register of Historic Places historic district made up of roughly 5,000 acres of meadow, woodland, and wetland, along six miles of the Potomac River shoreline from the head of Piscataway Creek to historic Marshall Hall in Prince George's and Charles counties in Maryland. The northern border of the historic district crosses Piscataway Creek, a tidal tributary that enters the Potomac River at Fort Washington, and includes the Fort Washington Marina as well as adjacent lands to the northeast of the marina. Additional lands across Piscataway Creek were added to the park in October 1974 and October 6, 1994 (P.L. 93-444; P.L. 103-350). The National Park Service describes the park as "a place of great natural beauty" with bald eagles, beaver, deer, fox, osprey, and many other species. In

[5] "Statement for Management, Piscataway Park," draft, January 1992, NACE files: Legislative History.

addition to a public fishing pier and two boardwalks over fresh water tidal wetlands, it includes various nature trails, meadows, and woodland areas.[6]

The actual boundaries of the park as established in 1961 include angled and curving lines with the Potomac River as the terminus to the northern boundary. Piscataway Creek separates approximately 200 acres, including the Fort Washington Marina and adjacent lands to the north and east, from the larger body of park land to the south and west. In lieu of natural boundaries, the current nearly 5,000-acre park unit is delineated by the property lines of the tax parcels purchased in order to create the park and the additional lands held in scenic easement, as referenced in the enabling legislation. Except for the 625 acres added in the 1970s, which included the Marshall Hall Amusement Park and the Fort Washington Marina, there have been few major changes to the original 1961 boundaries.[7]

Over the decades, the Piscataway Park Historic District, which includes the planned community Moyaone Reserve, named for the Piscataway Indian town that Captain John Smith visited in 1608, has to a great extent retained its rural, wooded character through strict residential covenants governing development within the reserve, and scenic easements with the NPS. In addition, the park historic district encompassed other noteworthy cultural resources to include archeological sites, including the Accokeek Creek Site discussed later. The park historic district also includes Marshall Hall, the complex of buildings at Hard Bargain Farm, and the agricultural landscapes at National Colonial Farm.[8]

The land in the park consists of two distinct terraces separated by a steep escarpment and drained by the streams that flow to the shore. Along much of the shore, the land meets the water in a gradual slope, creating marshes at the mouths of the streams. The terrain is covered by second growth trees, thickets, and tidal marshes that characterize the park land. Many species of birds have been sighted because the park provides various habitats, from fence row, to hardwood mature growth forest, swamp, tidal marsh, and river shoreline. Various archeologic and historic sites dating back for centuries are scattered throughout the park.[9]

---

[6] See www.nps.gov/pisc/pway.htm; NRHP Registration Form, draft, 2011.

[7] NRHP Nomination Form, draft, 2011, 47-48.
[8] Ibid.
[9] "Statement for Management, Piscataway Park," draft, January 1992, NACE files: Legislative History.

Paleo-Indian Period (10,500 B.C. – 8000 B.C.)

"Everything in the landscape is older than we think." W.G. Hoskins wrote these words in reference to the English countryside, but James Rice thinks they apply just as aptly in his environmental and historical study of the Potomac River region. The English settlers who descended on the Chesapeake lands in the early seventeenth century did not come to an uninhabited wilderness. This part of the world was in fact neither uninhabited nor a wilderness. When Captain John Smith "discovered" the Piscataway Indian tribe in 1608 (or did the Piscataways discover John Smith?), over thirteen generations had passed since a Piscataway chief, called a tayac, had first ruled over the various Indian tribes in the Potomac River area. The history of human habitation in this land goes back much further still, to at least 10,000 years ago. And according to Rice, "Never, in those long centuries, has nature been untouched" by the region's indigenous population, "but neither has it been completely domesticated."[10]

> The landscape that has emerged from this synthesis of culture and nature bears the marks not only of the last century of overdevelopment but also of the colonial period and of the thousands of years predating the English conquest.[11]

A recent ethnohistory of the Piscataway area notes this history before European invasion:

> The Piscataway (Piscatawa) have called southern Maryland home for centuries. Several thousand modern Piscataway, including members of the state-recognized Piscataway Indian Nation and the Piscataway Conoy Tribe of Maryland, are concentrated on the western shore of Maryland (their ancient homeland), although a large Piscataway Diaspora well beyond the homeland also exists. The Piscataway today include business owners, civil servants, educators, and health care professionals among many more occupations, all contributing substantially to the communities in which they live.
>
> All Piscataway are conscious of a history that reaches back long before Europeans invaded and occupied their homeland. Despite having endured the effects of settler colonialism for nearly 400 years, the Piscataway continue to thrive and prosper, their

[10] Rice, James D., *Nature and History in the Potomac Country* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2009) 257-258.
[11] Ibid., 258.

history having left its mark on the region. Many place names throughout the region, for example, are derived from Algonquian words used by the Piscataway.[12]

[For a detailed history of the Piscataway people and of the history of the region before Piscataway Park was created, please see Julia H. King, et. al., "Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Piscataway Park," National Park Service (2020), in the collection at Piscataway Park and also National Capital Parks - East, Washington, DC.]

Piscataway Park is well known for its rich archeological resources. The earliest evidence for prehistoric use of the upper coastal plain of the Potomac River Valley is found in the form of a distinctive type of stone projectile point, with a fluted point on one or both faces. Fluted points have been found from various sites in the Washington, DC region but as of 1980 none had been reported from the Piscataway Creek area. The Paleo-Indian Period experienced dramatic environmental changes as a result of the beginning of global warming and the melting of the continental ice sheets. The Piscataway Creek area was just south of the furthest advance of the glacial ice. Late in the Paleo-Indian Period, the area had a cold and wet environment, which supported various animals such as elk, black bear, wolf, and mastodon. Though no archeological evidence of Paleo-Indian hunters and gatherers has yet been recovered inside the current Piscataway Park boundaries, some archeologists believe its strategic position next to the complex environmental interface of the coastal plain and the Piedmont provinces probably make it a favorable location.[13]

Archaic Period (ca. 8000 B.C. – 1300 B.C.)

After the last Ice Age, melting glaciers prompted a rise in sea level that created the Chesapeake Bay and by around 8000 B.C., the area within the present-day park was covered with a hardwood forest of birch, beech, and oak. During the Archaic Period inhabitants made a number of items from fibers, wood, skins,

[12] Julia H. King, Travis T. Hanson, Scott M. Strickland, "Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Piscataway Park," National Park Service (2020), in the collection at Piscataway Park and also National Capital Parks – East (NACE), Washington, DC.

[13] Stephen R. Potter, *A Review of Archeological Resources in Piscataway Park, Maryland* (National Park Service National Capital Region (NPS NCR), July 1980), 13, NACE Files.

and other organic materials. These items were rarely preserved in the archeological record, so archeologists rely on tools fashioned from stone to learn about the inhabitants.[14]

The most distinctive artifacts of the Early Archaic Period (8000 B.C. – 6000 B.C.) were projectile points used to tip spear shafts propelled with the use of a spear thrower, or atlatl. The points were small with serrated edges and corner notches, serrated edges and straight stems, or straight stems and bifurcated (deeply indented) bases. These latter points were found in limited numbers on scattered sites along the Potomac shore.[15]

By the Middle Archaic Period (6000 – 3000 B.C.) the climate was warm and fluctuated between moist and dry. An oak-hickory climax forest covered parts of the Washington area, and the water level of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries continued to rise with the melting of glacial ice. It was during this time that oyster beds became established. The archeological evidence for this period remains limited compared to the cultural remains of later periods, primarily in the form of projectile points.[16]

During the Late Archaic Period (3000 B.C. – 1300 B.C.), the warm, dry climate conditions and the oak-hickory forest remained relatively unchanged, but the sea level within the Chesapeake Bay continued to rise. Increased salinization of the Potomac River led to the spread of oyster populations as far upriver as Nanjemoy Creek, Maryland. In addition, the anadromous fish apparently reached the fall line in large numbers by roughly 2000 B.C. to 1500 B.C. and probably reached the Piscataway Creek area around the same time. The Late Archaic inhabitants of the Potomac River Valley established base camps at the confluence of Piscataway Creek and the Potomac River in part because it was a significant fish spawning ground.[17]

Human occupation of the Piscataway Park area significantly increased in the Late Archaic Period. Seasonal base camps, lithic workshop/quarry sites, and short-term processing stations have been found throughout the park. The base camps were often located where a stream entered Piscataway Creek or the Potomac River, whereas the short-term processing stations were located further up Piscataway Creek. The material culture of the Late Archaic Period included ground stone axes, hammerstones, atlatl

---

[14] Stephen R. Potter, "A New Look at the Accokeek Creek Complex," in *The Prehistoric People of Accokeek Creek*, with Robert L. Stephenson, (Alice Ferguson Foundation, 1984), 36-37. The Accokeek Creek Site is now more accurately referred to as the Accokeek Creek Complex because it encompasses six distinct sites.
[15] Potter, 1980, 14, 16.
[16] Ibid., 16-17.
[17] Potter, 1980, 16-17.

weights, various cutting tools, drill points, polished bone hairpins, bone awls, and tubular bone beads. Near the end of this period, the inhabitants manufactured bowls out of steatite (soapstone) quarried from deposits in what is today Washington, DC, or Fairfax County, Virginia.[18]

Woodland Period (ca.1300 B.C. – 1608 A.D.)

During the Early Woodland Period, which began around 1300 B.C. and lasted until 200 A.D., the climate became increasingly moist and mild, and the modern forest association of oak, hickory, and chestnut was established. The initial settlement and subsistence pattern remained much the same as the Late Archaic. The distinguishing feature of the Early Woodland Period was the invention or introduction of pottery making in the Potomac Valley around 1300 B.C. The earliest sherds of pottery, composed of crushed soapstone and prepared clay, were a direct translation of the soapstone bowl forms of the Late Archaic Period and had a similar oblong, flat bottom shape, except that these vessels were made from fired clay tempered with crushed steatite. Later, the steatite-tempered ceramic vessels changed to a wide-mouthed, open bowl form with a pointed or conical bottom and exterior walls paddled with cords.[19]

The Middle Woodland Period began with archeological remains of the Popes Creek (the Native peoples living at the site during this time period) phase. Sites of the same type as the Popes Creek site on the Maryland shore of the Potomac River attest to the heavy gathering of oysters by 200 A.D. Other dietary items included fish, waterfowl, turtle, squirrel, beaver, and deer. The primary diagnostic artifact was the large thick wide-mouthed, conical based pottery vessel, with impressions of nets on the exterior. Other artifacts include small, short-stemmed projectile points, small, side-notched points, knives, choppers, stone mortars and grinding stones, hammerstones, bone awls, and stone axes. In Piscataway Park, Popes Creek phase pottery was most concentrated in the area to the north of Accokeek Creek. The Accokeek Creek area represented a major cluster of Popes Creek phase sites. Other clusters were downriver from Accokeek Creek and upriver below the fall line of the Potomac River.[20]

By 750 B.C. the open-mouthed clay bowl form evolved into “Accokeek pottery,” which was tempered with sand instead of soapstone but retained the cord marked (pottery with a cord impression) exterior walls. Many sherds of this early Woodland pottery were later found during Alice Ferguson’s excavation at the Accokeek Creek Site in the 1930s. The Piscataway Creek area seems to have served as one of the

[18] Ibid., 17.
[19] Ibid., 18.
[20] Ibid., 19.

central spring/summer base camps for the people of this culture, which archeologists refer to as the Accokeek phase.[21]

The archeological record from that time reveals several significant changes to include an increase in the number of small camp and processing sites, as well as an increase in the number of artifacts found in those sites. The material remains of this archeological culture included small stemmed projectile points, chopping tools, bone awls and flake tools for cutting. The settlement and subsistence pattern seems to have consisted of small fishing camps that were occupied during the spring fish runs, and a central spring-summer base camp where fresh water mussels were collected, wild plant foods gathered, and perhaps some very early tending of food plants.[22]

During the latter part of the Middle Woodland Period (roughly 200 A.D. to 900 A.D.), a relatively uniform archeologic culture had developed throughout the Chesapeake Bay region, reflected in shell-tempered large and small wide-mouthed bowls marked with nets or cords on their exterior walls. Around A.D. 700 A.D. the Mockley people were starting to live in villages for more than six months of the year. Growing maize would become increasingly important over the next 200 years. Along Piscataway Creek, the Mockley people established fall hunting and foraging camps at what is called Mockley Point, a cape of land jutting out between the Potomac River and Piscataway Creek, and Clagett's Cove further east on Piscataway Creek.[23]

The Late Woodland Period, which began around 900 A.D. and continued until the arrival of the English explorers led by Captain John Smith in 1608, was represented by a number of different archeological complexes, identified primarily on the basis of distinctive pottery. In the upper Potomac coastal plain, the dominant type of pottery was made from clay tempered with crushed quartz and/or sand and shaped into medium-sized wide-mouthed jars, with a constricted neck and rounded bottom. The exterior of the pottery was cord marked. The other ceramic of the period was tempered with crushed shell and marked with fabric impressions on the exterior.[24]

During the Late Woodland Period, agriculture intensified and the growing Piscataway Indian population led to the establishment of a permanent village that depended on stored food supplies. The settlement pattern for most of this period seemed to conform to the pattern that Captain John Smith would observe

[21] Potter, 1984, 37-38.
[22] Potter, 1980, 18.
[23] Potter, 1984, 38.
[24] Potter, 1980, 20.

when he arrived. The major villages were usually located where a stream or streams of varying size entered a larger stream, giving the village access to fresh water.[25] "Piscataway," in fact, means "'where the waters blend." In the Piscataway belief system, rivers and streams were more than just sources of water, however. Earth was conceived of as Mother, and rivers "as the veins of her life's blood."[26]

Having large tracts of naturally fertile and easily tilled soils nearby was another factor in village location. Most of the villages on the upper Potomac coastal plain appear to have been palisaded for defense in contrast to those on the lower plain. American Indians occupied these village sites for part of the year as they turned to planting and harvesting maize for subsistence. They established fall hunting and foraging camps nearby. The seasonal fish runs associated with fishing grounds along the Potomac provided a reliable source of protein when food that had been stored from the annual harvests diminished. The local soils were ideal for growing corn during periods of drought, a frequent occurrence in the late 16th and early 17th century Maryland.[27] Traditionally, corn has had a very special place in the Piscataway view of the world. Corn was "most central to life," and represented womanhood. Planted together with beans and squash, the corn acted as a pole for the beans and provided shade for the squash. In August of every year, the Piscataway and other indigenous peoples celebrated the Green Corn Ceremony, and the corn and other vegetables were dried for use throughout the year.[28]

The inhabitants also began to inter their dead in mass burial sites known as ossuaries. When enough people had passed away, the Piscataway prepared the dead in the Feast of the Dead. They believed that the dead went on a "spirit journey," and they placed the bones of several people together in an ossuary so that no one had to make that journey alone.[29]

NPS archeologist Dr. Stephen R. Potter, an authority on the development of Algonquian culture in the Potomac Valley over the course of the Late Woodland Period, reported that several great American Indian language families were spoken by various "groups" that happened to share some cultural traits. Algonquian and Iroquoian are two such language families. Most of the coastal peoples in the mid-Atlantic region spoke an eastern Algonquian language, to include the Piscataway group. The Piscataway Indians

---

[25] Ibid., 21
[26] Gabrielle Tayac, "Keeping the Original Instructions," in Gerald McMaster and Clifford E. Trafzer, editors, *Native Universe - Voices of Indian America* (Washington, DC: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 2008) 77.
[27] Potter, 1980, 21.
[28] Ibid., 79.
[29] Ibid., 80, and Potter, 1980, 21.

lived at the intersection of Piscataway Creek and the Potomac River immediately preceding European contact. They were part of a larger chiefdom called the Conoy. The Conoy's territory extended along the eastern shore of the Potomac from the mouth of the river to the general vicinity of Washington, DC, crossing the river to the west. The territory continued along the west bank of the Potomac to an area just south of today's Mount Vernon estate. The Piscataway, as the largest and most politically powerful of the Conoy groups, ruled the Conoy chiefdom from the center of the Piscataway settlement.[30] Thus the name "Piscataway" appears to have been the name of a larger political unit and leading tribe and was also the name of the principal village at the mouth of Piscataway Creek. The Indians who lived in the Piscataway Park area during colonial times were also known as Conoy.

The Late Woodland Period was one of accelerated change for the native peoples living along Piscataway Creek. Local cultures reflected increasing social and political complexity. As populations grew, in part due to the settled village life and greater reliance on maize agriculture, social and political life became more complex. Based on the early 17th century observations of the English, the natives had developed a pattern of seasonal subsistence. In early spring, they ate small animals and fish, and in late spring they supplemented this with freshwater mussels, crabs, and oysters. In the summer they relied on fish, small mammals, berries, and green corn. From fall to early winter they fished, hunted deer, harvested maize, and gathered nuts, living on the surpluses during the late winter months. The need to produce and locate food greatly influenced Piscataway life. Agriculture tied them to the land of their villages but other food sources required those who lived along the Potomac River to move to new locations during the winter months. The diversity of staples created the necessary basis for Piscataway social stability. If one food source failed during a particular year, there were other sources.[31]

There were many Late Woodland sites in the vicinity of Piscataway Creek. For one of these sites, archeologists discovered a circular palisade line in the southern sections of the Accokeek Creek Site that was actually the remains of a village dating from the first half of the Late Woodland Period. Artist, entrepreneur, and amateur archeologist Alice Ferguson identified this site in 1935. Believing that this village site was the one mapped by John Smith after his expedition up the Potomac, she called it "Moyaone." The site which Ferguson found was in fact not the historic Moyaone village but represented a prehistoric Piscataway village that had been abandoned during the Late Woodland Period before

[30] NRHP Nomination Form, draft, 2011, 29.
[31] Reynolds Scott-Childress, "History of Marshall Hall Property," University of Maryland and NPS, 2007, 8; Potter, "New Look," 1984, 38.

European contact. By the early 17th century before European contact, the village residents had moved on to a new village, not yet discovered. The large village was located along the Potomac River. In the 1970s, further investigation of the site revealed two prehistoric pits, five or six of the original stockades, and a colonial era trash pit.[32] However, the exact location of the Moyaone village remains to be discovered.

The area of the Piscataway village has been populated for more than 5,000 years. The tribes populating the area for much of this time were semi-nomadic. The Piscataway settled there around 1300. From 1300 to 1500 powerful confederacies developed around the Piscataway, the Iroquois to the north and the Powhatan to the south. By the mid-1500s the Piscataway people had developed a conservative culture resistant to outside influences. They remained distinct from the other tribes on their distant southern, western and northern borders.[33]

The Piscataway at the site became the center of a fairly extensive affiliation of Native groups through the 1500s, and the Piscataway Indians received tribute from numerous tribes along the Potomac and Patuxent river valleys. By the end of the 1500s, however, they were threatened by a series of incursions. The Powhatan were expanding from the south, and the Iroquois tribes threatened them from the north. The greatest threat, however, was the Susquehannocks, an Iroquoian group, from the north. Susquehannock raids on the Piscataway intensified after 1575 followed by the beginnings of the European intrusion into Maryland's eastern shore.[34]

European Contact (1608 – 1691)

Based on existing archeological evidence, it is unlikely that the people of the Accokeek Creek Site had any direct contact with the Europeans before the Europeans settled Jamestown Colony in 1607. The first recorded visit of whites to the site and European contact with the Conoy (Piscataway) Indians was on June 16, 1608, when Captain John Smith and the 15 men on his expedition traveled up the Potomac River and visited several villages within Conoy territory. The Piscataway received Captain Smith kindly, seeing him as a potential ally in their conflict with other American Indian groups. Smith recorded that at the time the Indians of the area had hatchets, knives, and pieces of iron, which they had obtained from the Susquehannocks. Smith composed a map based on his voyage, locating the sites of the American Indian

[32] Potter, 1984, 38-39.
[33] Scott-Childress, "History of Marshall Hall Property," 4, 6. See also James H. Merrell, "Cultural Continuity among the Piscataway Indians of Colonial Maryland," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Oct. 1979), pp. 548-570.
[34] Ibid., 15.

villages he had visited or seen. On this map he identified the village with stockades that he visited south of Piscataway Creek and north of Accokeek Creek, and as noted gave it the name "Moyaone." That name appears on the early colonial records of Virginia. Archeologists and historians continued to refer to it by this name. Other records from the time refer to it as "Piscataway."[35] Initially, the Conoy (Piscataway) and Europeans had only sporadic contact, and one historian has suggested the "[t]he arrival of Captain John Smith and his exploring party in 1608 marked no turning point for the Piscataways: the English were merely one more group of intruders."[36] Eventually however, depredations by neighboring Indians and the incursion into the region by Europeans had profound effects on Piscataway life along the Potomac.[37]

Although contact between the Conoy (Piscataway) and European settlers was sporadic initially, by 1622 the European fur trade in Conoy territory had spread as far north as the village of Nacotchtank on the Anacostia River and included most Piscataway villages. Formal treaties between Maryland colonists and the Conoy chiefdom purported to place the Conoy under the protection of the colonial government and included land rights for the chiefdom.[38]

In the decades after Captain John Smith's visit, relations between the Indians and the English at the vicinity of Piscataway deteriorated. Though the Piscataway Indians sustained a generally peaceful relationship with the English, in November 1623, Virginia governor Sir Francis Wyatt led a punitive military expedition against the Piscataway and their allies the Nacotchtank to seal an English alliance with a rival tribe, the Patawomeke. Wyatt and his men burned Piscataway villages, including Moyaone, and fields.[39]

Maryland Governor Leonard Calvert came to the Piscataway Creek site in 1634 to ask permission from the Piscataway leadership to settle whites in Maryland. In 1634, Calvert chose to make St. Mary's City in southern Maryland the colonial capital rather than somewhere closer to Maryland's western shore. This kept English settlement away from Piscataway territory for several decades. The Piscataway Indians found

---

[35] Stephenson, *The Prehistoric People of Accokeek Creek*, 1984, 33; Anna Coxe Toogood, "Piscataway Park: General Historical Background Study," NPS 1969, 1-2; Scott-Childress, 3.
[36] Merrell, ""Cultural Continuity…," 553.
[37] Potter, 1980, 22. See, especially, Chapter III, "The Historical and Ethnohistorical Context of Piscataway National Park," in King, et. al., "Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Piscataway Park."
[38] Potter, 1980, 22; NPS, National Capital Parks-East, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment,* July 2009, 49.
[39] Scott-Childress, 18-19.

that their Susquehannock and Iroquois neighbors resented the peaceful relationship that the Piscataway had with the English and would conduct raids on Piscataway villages throughout the mid-17th century.[40]

British King Charles I granted a charter to the Calvert family for the lands in Maryland in 1632. Cecil Calvert (Lord Baltimore) was interested in making the Piscataway Indians allies as well as converting American Indians to Christianity. Upon hearing of the natural riches of the Potomac River basin, he arranged to send the first boatload of settlers to Maryland. From 1634 until 1680, the Piscataway village and the surrounding area "remained essentially a frontier for the Maryland colony located near the mouth of the Potomac at St. Mary's." The Piscataway Indians remained allies of the Maryland colonists during this period and their cooperation "made a significant difference to the development of Maryland." Ultimately, however, the poor treatment of the Piscataway Indians by the colonists led to a rapid decline of the tribe in Maryland.[41]

At the time the Maryland colony was established, the Piscataway occupied the western part of the west peninsula of Tidewater Maryland as far north as the Falls of the Potomac. Between 1627 and 1631 they had lost roughly 1,000 members in raids by the Seneca. Though the Piscataway remained dominant in southern Maryland, they faced growing competition from tribes pushing in from the south. Competition from the Iroquois from New England and the Powhatan Confederacy of Virginia depleted the strength and numbers of the Piscataway. The Piscataway Indians responded by developing peaceful relations with the Maryland colonists, and when the Maryland colonists offered protection, they readily accepted. One reason the Piscataway might have suffered so many casualties in their conflicts with other tribes was that they were predominantly agriculturalists and this put them at a disadvantage in conflict situations.[42]

The relationship between the English colonists and the Piscataway Indians remained positive during the "inter-dependent" years of the 1630s, and they reinforced each other in fending off attacks by hostile Indians to the north. The 1630s also witnessed Jesuit missionary efforts among the Piscataway, but a decade later the missionary post among the Piscataway had to be abandoned because of raids by the Susquehannocks. By the end of the decade the era of peace and profitable exchange between the Piscataway and the colonists was drawing to a close.[43]

---

[40] Stephenson, 1984, 33.
[41] Toogood, 11-12, 14.
[42] Ibid., 17-20.
[43] Ibid., 28, 33, 39-40.

Over the next few decades, the relationship between the English colonists and the Indians of Maryland continued to erode. Yet the colonists still needed the protection they gained from having the Piscataway on their frontier and at the same time the Piscataway increasingly looked to the Maryland government for support and supplies. Intertribal warfare, especially raids on the Piscataway by the Seneca and Susquehannocks, increased in the mid-1600s as various tribes fought for control of the fur trade. The Seneca and Susquehannocks stepped up their raids on the Conoy. From 1642 to 1652 Maryland settlers and the Piscataway Indians fought the Susquehannocks together to try to stop the raids.[44]

By the mid-1600s the Piscataway resistance to raids from neighboring tribes was weakening. The Piscataway were also feeling increasing pressure from settlers who were moving north into their lands. The Conoy chiefdom and colonial Maryland signed formal treaties in 1666 (renewed in 1670), 1692, and 1700 placing the Conoy under the protection of the colonial government of Maryland. This included guarantees for lands to be set aside for the chiefdom as well as hunting and fishing rights for its members. In return for this protection, the Conoy were required to pay an annual tribute (usually in the form of bows and arrows), return fugitive servants and slaves, and have their chiefs confirmed by the royal governor. The 1666 treaty defined the Piscataway's tenuous and subordinate position in the Maryland colony, and according to NPS historian Coxey Toogood, "helped confirm the Piscataway downfall."[45]

One historian has argued, however, that the Piscataways maintained some semblance of independence through much of the seventeenth century.

> Those Piscataways who survived English diseases and Susquehannock invasions continued to live mush as their ancestors had. Aside from adopting material goods that could be incorporated into native culture without causing major changes, Piscataways remained largely untouched by contact with colonists. The tribe preserved traditional practices not only in religion, political life, and relations with other tribes, but also in social distinctions – and the English still recognized these distinctions.[46]

Certain restrictions placed on the Piscataway by the English, for example, were more theoretical than practical. New tribal chiefs were supposed to be confirmed by Maryland authorities, but in fact, the royal

---

[44] Potter, 1980, 23; Toogood, 42, 44.
[45] Toogood, 48-49; Potter, 1980, 22.
[46] Merrell, ""Cultural Continuity…," 566.

governor simply accepted the leader chosen by the Piscataways.[47] Other attempts at controlling the Piscataways were thwarted by persistent indigenous customs. "Civilizing" invaders have tried to suppress the religious practices of indigenous peoples everywhere. In Maryland, Catholic missionaries tried to convert the Piscataways. Although many did join the church, traditional indigenous practices, such as the Piscataways' Green Corn Ceremony, survived by "hiding" under the cloak of an "official" ceremony, in this case the Feast of the Assumption held annually in August.[48]

Eventually, however, the pressures became too severe for the Piscataway. In 1674 a Susquehannock band from southeastern Pennsylvania moved into the area prompting conflict with the Piscataway, other native groups, and the whites. The Susquehannock people protected themselves by building a fort – a rectangular, stockade area known as Susquehannock Fort. The Senecas defeated the Susquehannocks and the surviving Susquehannocks moved south into Conoy territory in 1675, taking up residence along the south shore of Piscataway Creek. They built a bastioned, stockade fort two miles west of the Piscataway Indian fort and village. In the summer of 1675 the Susquehannocks were wrongly blamed for Indian depredations along the Maryland and Virginia frontiers. In response, in September 1675, Virginia and Maryland militia joined forces to drive out the Susquehannocks. The Virginia and Maryland militia besieged the Susquehannock Fort on the Piscataway Creek for roughly six weeks, with the Susquehannocks eventually escaping.[49] Amateur archeologist Alice Lescinska Lowe Ferguson would later locate the remains of that fort in her excavations in what was called the Clagett's Cove area of the site.[50]

In 1680 the Conoy built a fort in the area. In August 1681 either Seneca or Susquehannock Indians attacked the fort and took 17 Conoy prisoners. In addition to the persistent threats posed by neighboring Indians, in the late 17th century, increasing competition with English colonial settlers prompted the Piscataway Indians to abandon Maryland's western shore. Though Piscataway leaders were willing to petition the colonial government for formal recognition and to sign treaties, the desire of the English colonists to establish large tobacco plantations resulted in broken agreements and occasional violent

[47] Ibid., 561.
[48] Tayac, "Keeping the Original Instructions," 80.
[49] Potter, 1980, 22-23; NPS, NCP-E, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment,* 49.
[50] Potter, 1984, 34.

clashes until most of the Piscataway abandoned the region. The main Conoy element of roughly 300 left southern Maryland in 1697.[51]

After moving to a couple other sites around 1700 they located on Heater's Island in the upper Potomac south of Frederick County, Maryland, where an epidemic drastically reduced their population in 1704. After struggling at several different areas, roughly a decade later most of the remaining Conoy migrated to southern Pennsylvania. Others, however, remained in southern Maryland, in small communities or working as indentured servants on white plantations. Those who remained in Maryland apparently never reorganized as a tribe and lost their official status as "Indians." The colonial government reclassified them as 'free Negroes." Little is known about their history from that time until the 1880s when some Piscataway started to identify themselves as 'Wesorts' in an attempt to be recognized as an ethnically and racially distinct group. Currently three groups identify themselves as descendants of the Piscataway-Conoy: the Piscataway-Conoy Confederacy, and Related Subtribes, the Piscataway Indian Nation, Inc., and the Maryland Heritage Society.[52]

Colonial Settlement and the Republic Period

The particular demands of agriculture and tobacco production continued to shape life in southern Maryland for much of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Today's Piscataway Park contains the farmland of colonial tobacco planters. The late 17th century and early 18th century was a period of transition. Between 1662, with the first grant of land within the present-day park boundaries, and the American Revolution, the colonial settlement called Piscataway town served as a thriving trade center for Tidewater Maryland. The farmers living on land that currently constitutes Piscataway Park, and used the local waterways due to the scarce road network to transport their tobacco to the wharves at Piscataway town – a wealthy river port community – where the goods were placed on boats and merchants and traders interacted. From the late 17th to early 18th century then the location, climate, and geography of the area encouraged the development of fishing, lime manufacture, and ship maintenance. With the declining role of tobacco

[51] Meringolo, "The Accokeek Foundation and Piscataway Park," 47; Potter, 1980, 23; NPS, NCP-E, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment,* 50.
[52] Potter, 1980, 23; NPS, NCP-E, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment,* 50.

as currency after the American Revolution, the silting in of the creek, and the exhaustion of the area's farmland, members of the Piscataway colonial community adopted a more rural, isolated existence.[53]

Before 1662, there were some frontiersmen who poached on the land, but the daily threat of Susquehannock and Iroquois raids on the frontier discouraged major population growth in the area. Though much of the land along the south side of Piscataway Creek had been laid out in tracts during the 1660s, most landowners chose to live in the more protected area near the St. Mary's community to the south. During this time only two landowners held land within the present park boundaries: Randle Hanson, a bondsman who had completed his service and received a grant in August 1662 from Charles Calvert, son and heir of Cecil Calvert, Lord Baltimore, for 500 acres along the Potomac south of Piscataway Creek; and William Calvert. Unlike Hanson, William Calvert never occupied his 3,000-acre estate east of the Potomac and south of Piscataway Creek. This tract, laid out in 1662 (later known as Calvert or Piscataway Manor), constituted the heart of the Piscataway Indians' traditional lands.[54]

English settlers began to move north from St. Mary's in the late 1600s, but they did not start to develop a community in the Piscataway area until after 1692. By 1700 the period of transition marked by an Indian-dominated frontier had come to an end and the natural enticements of the area sparked greater land speculation and settlement. The climate, geography, and location of the Piscataway area were good for raising and trading tobacco, for the development of fisheries and lime manufacturing, and for the protective anchorage of trading ships. Also, the rich soil and topography proved beneficial for diversified agriculture (corn, wheat, fruit orchards) and livestock. The coastal location of the land within the present park boundaries remained a critical factor in the area's historical development.[55]

The Piscataway community peaked in the 1700s by exploiting the area's rich natural resources until by the end of the century the intensive land cultivation started having a negative impact. During that time, tobacco became a payment means for clothes, manufactured goods, taxes, fines for violating court orders, and contributions for church construction. As tobacco production increasingly dominated the Maryland economy, English merchants took growing interest in Maryland and Virginia and the trade of tobacco for manufactured goods expanded.[56]

---

[53] Toogood, 77.
[54] Ibid., 78-80.
[55] Toogood, 82, 84-86.
[56] Ibid., 89, 91-93.

After its designation as an official inspection point for regulating the quality of tobacco exported to Europe in 1747, Piscataway served as one of the principal river towns of the Chesapeake Bay for the next two decades up to the American Revolution, gaining wealth and prestige. The inspection system guaranteed that the quality of tobacco leaving Maryland remained consistent, keeping the demand for Maryland tobacco high. All tobacco grown in the colony had to pass through an official inspection station, and Piscataway became one of several small river towns that flourished during the golden age of tobacco production in southern Maryland. It grew into a commercial center, with shops, warehouses, and inns to support the trade ships and others involved in trade. Several showplace mansions, such as Marshall Hall, were constructed. The landed gentry, having both wealth and time, pursued social activities, entertaining regularly among themselves. Class tensions developed between planter and field hands. Plantation owners moved toward the use of slave labor in operating their estates as the 18th century progressed. By 1750, half the plantations in the county relied to some degree on slave labor. The wealthiest families might include hundreds of slaves in their households.[57]

On the eve of the American Revolution, crops were good and many individuals in the region preferred to continue to live under British rule, but some, especially those in debt, expressed mounting resentment against the existing trade system. There was also growing dissatisfaction with the official inspection system used at the designated tobacco warehouses. By December 1774, violence and confusion was beginning to hit the Piscataway area, disrupting trade. In mid-1775, the colonies were starting to prepare for revolution. Increased trade disruption prompted the local planters to shift from tobacco to flax, cotton and corn. Toward the end of the 18th century, soil depletion and erosion discouraged farmers from growing tobacco as an exclusive cash crop, and soil erosion was starting to fill in Piscataway Creek, blocking easy water access. In 1775, Piscataway town lost its main economic basis as the build up to the revolution discouraged and eventually prohibited trade with Britain. After the war, most of the formal trade went to Baltimore, Maryland, cutting out other colonial ports.[58]

With the end of the American Revolution, the western shore of Maryland became more insular, and Piscataway town's role in commerce declined as the tobacco trade faltered. A new, more restrictive warehouse inspection system was introduced that had a negative impact on the tobacco market and the

[57] Toogood, 96-97, 100, 103,106, 108; Meringolo, "The Accokeek Foundation and Piscataway Park,"47.
[58] Ibid., 117, 127, 130-131.

Piscataway wharves became so silted up that the warehouse had to be moved downstream. Farming continued to be the main occupation in the Piscataway community throughout the 19th century.[59]

Marshall Hall

One important site that reflected the social and economic history of the region during the colonial and early republic periods was Marshall Hall. The Marshall Hall mansion was probably erected by Thomas Marshall I, grandson of William Marshall I, in Charles County, Maryland, around 1725 as a one and one-half story brick house and enlarged around 1760. It was a good example of colonial architecture, an 18th century dwelling built in the Chesapeake hall and parlor plan.

Today the 18th century Marshall Hall estate defines the southern boundary of the Piscataway Park historic district. The estate contains the ruins of the Marshall Hall mansion. The Marshall Hall mansion is notable as the largest dwelling in southern Maryland known to date before 1740 and historically included many "high-style" features that are the earliest datable examples recorded in Maryland. It was also associated with the Marshall family, one of southern Maryland's most socially prominent and affluent families during the colonial, early republic, and antebellum periods. Because of its historic significance, Marshall Hall was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1976.[60]

View of Marshall Hall, c.1900. *(Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association)*

[59] Ibid., 138-139.
[60] NPS, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, Marshall Hall," May 12, 1976, NACE files; NRHP Registration Form" draft, 2011, 4.

William Marshall I, founder of the Marshall family in Maryland, was born in England in 1607 and arrived in Maryland in 1640, just six years after Governor Leonard Calvert and roughly 200 settlers arrived and established the first settlement in the colony at St. Mary's.[61] Shortly after his arrival, William Marshall I took up residence at or near the head of the Wicomico River near what is now called Newport, which became part of Charles County in 1658. On February 8, 1650, he received a patent/warrant from Governor Calvert for 500 acres of land on the west side of the Wicomico River. At some point between February 1650 and June 1655, Marshall married Katherine Hebden. Three of their children survived them. When William Marshall I died in 1673, his 1,073 acres were divided among his orphaned minor children. He left 550 acres in Charles County to his oldest son, William Marshall II and another 525 acres to his son Joshua and daughter Elizabeth. William Marshall II married Elizabeth Hanson, daughter of another early Maryland settler Randolph Hanson. William and Elizabeth Marshall had four children: William III (1690-1731), Barbara (born and died 1692), Thomas Marshall I (1694 – 1759), and Richard. Like his father, William Marshall II lived on the Wicomico River "Marshall" plantation. When he died, the homestead passed to William III, the eldest son.[62]

Thomas Marshall I probably constructed Marshall Hall around 1725 and a year later married Elizabeth Stoddert, widow of James Stoddert. They had five children before Elizabeth died in 1749 or 1750. Marshall remarried a few years later and probably enlarged Marshall Hall around this time. He was a successful import merchant, landing and selling goods at his own piers and warehouses at Marshall Hall. He was also a successful plantation owner and using slave labor made major improvements on the property. He expanded it to nearly 1,000 acres by the time he died in 1759.

Thomas Hanson Marshall II (1731-1801) inherited his father's estate to include Marshall Hall, and he maintained his plantations using slave labor. He was one of the wealthiest planters in Charles County, Maryland, and was also committed to the political well-being of his country. He represented Charles County, attending various Continental Congresses and Provincial Conventions before and during the American Revolution, and he commanded a company of Charles County militia. He was an acquaintance of George Washington who had taken up residence at Mount Vernon in 1754, within sight of Marshall Hall. The two distinguished planters traded land, seeds, crops, and timber.

---

[61] Susan Long, *Historic Structure Report Architectural Data Section for Marshall Hall Piscataway Park* (National Park Service, January 1983), 7-8.
[62] Ibid., 8-9.

Thomas Marshall II and his wife had six children. When he died in 1801, his eldest son, Thomas Marshall III (1757 – 1829), inherited the Marshall Hall estate. Thomas Marshall III became a physician and served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. He reportedly became blind during that war but continued to practice medicine until his death in 1829. His eldest son, Thomas Hanson Marshall IV (1796-1843) inherited and continued to manage Marshall Hall plantation, though now smaller in size and less stable economically. His son, Thomas Marshall V (1826-1903) inherited Marshall Hall in 1843. He suffered financial losses as a result of the Civil War and was forced to sell the Marshall Hall plantation in 1866, ending a 200-year Marshall family association with the farm.[63]

The property remained in private hands and had several owners until 1895, when the Mount Vernon and Marshall Hall Steamboat Company purchased the remaining 412 acres. By that time Marshall Hall had become an area attraction, the Marshall Hall Amusement Park, where visitors from Washington, DC, arrived and departed by steamboats that also made regular stops across the river at Mount Vernon. The amusement park included gardens, croquet and jousting greens where jousting tournaments were held each year, gazebos, and concession stands amidst the old plantation house and a number of outbuildings that had been erected to serve the visitors. These late 19th century amusement park structures stood until the mid-20th century when they were demolished to make way for construction of a modern amusement park.[64]

Mid to Late Nineteenth Century

Piscataway's role in commerce declined in the late 18th century as the tobacco industry faltered. Also, the channel to the Piscataway River wharves had silted up so badly by 1835 that the major tobacco warehouse had been moved a half mile downstream. Despite continued dredging to keep a six-foot channel open for small steamers, commercial life in the area remained in grave condition. Farming continued to be the main occupation in the Piscataway community throughout the 19th century, with increased development of the fishing industries.

With the continued dependence on slave labor on the tobacco plantations in southern Maryland, the people held an allegiance to the Confederacy during the Civil War. Though the Confederates lost the war, southern sentiments remained strong in Prince George's County along with the cultivation of tobacco. After the war, the Piscataway community focused on farming and expanded planting to include hay, oats,

[63] Ibid., 10-12.
[64] Ibid., 12-13.

rye, potatoes, sweet potatoes, fruits, and vegetables, though the main crop continued to be corn, wheat, and tobacco. In the mid-20th century tobacco still represented the main crops of southern Maryland farmers. Thanks to the area's insularity long after the Civil War, Piscataway remained a predominately agrarian economy and culture. Prince George's County in general remained rural with scattered development into the 1960s.[65]

In the mid to late 19th century, local residents and collectors began to recognize that the Piscataway Creek region was an excellent spot to search for American Indian artifacts. The first documented archeological find occurred in 1859 when Peter Dent Hatton uncovered a small burial site on his property. Around the same time other area residents were collecting projectile points, ground stone tools, worked bone objects and potsherds from Marshall Hall and Piscataway Creek. The earliest known archeological survey of the area that would later become Piscataway Park was conducted by William Dinwiddie in 1891. Though his survey was far from systematic, Dinwiddie interviewed collectors in the Marshall Hall and Farmington areas and mentioned finding six "village" sites. He also recorded information about two native burial sites near Farmington, Maryland. There were other collectors in the late 19th century as well. In 1908, Dr. Ales Hrdlicka of the Smithsonian Institution and J.D. McGuire collected human bones from an aboriginal cemetery, or ossuary, near the mouth of Piscataway Creek. A map at the Smithsonian's Anthropological Archives identified a burial place inland from the Farmington Landing site, so the Hrdlicka-McGuire burials might have come from there and not the mouth of the creek.[66]

The Agrarian Ideal, 1920s/1930s

The first decades of the 20th century brought significant change to this quiet agricultural region. In the 1920s a small group of Washington, DC, residents began to discover the appeal of the Potomac River shoreline in Maryland in the Accokeek area. At the time, Accokeek was a remote, rural farming area, accessible from Washington only by unpaved roads or the boats that ran from the wharves at Water Street in Southeast DC to the small piers on the Potomac River and Piscataway Creek. Initially these residents came as short-term visitors, but some would end up creating a permanent community in Accokeek. These early Accokeek residents were primarily government scientists and mid-level managers who shared an interest in conservation and a deep appreciation for the significance of the local scenery and landscape. Many of them believed that rural working landscapes had a rejuvenating effect and that

[65] Toogood, 138-141.
[66] Potter, 1980, 10.

agricultural life signified independence. Access to nature, they maintained, could cure fatigue, ill health, and other negative effects of urban life.[67]

One of the most prominent of these early visitors was Henry G. Ferguson, a scientist employed by the U.S. Geological Survey. Henry Ferguson and his wife Alice Ferguson were residents of Georgetown in Washington at the time and had a circle of scientists, ministers, and politically well-connected friends and colleagues. The Fergusons, who were looking for a quiet weekend retreat, carved out space on land along Bryan Point Road in the Accokeek area. In 1922 Henry and Alice purchased a 130-acre farm directly across the Potomac River from Mount Vernon in the Accokeek community in southern Prince George's County, Maryland. They purchased this 130-acre farm, which they called "Hard Bargain" initially, as a weekend retreat where they could enjoy quiet rural living, though it would soon come to be much more. There the Fergusons farmed on a small scale, extolling the benefits of rural life. The Fergusons soon introduced their friends to the area and their efforts would spark greater interest in the shoreline.[68]

Hard Bargain would provide an environment where the Fergusons, Robert and Lenore Straus, architect Charles Wagner, and others could develop and share the ideas and vision that would later lead to the new planned community called Moyaone as a rural alternative to suburban life. Their commitment to conserving the land along Piscataway Creek in the face of threatened development ultimately played a major role in the creation of Piscataway Park.

The Hard Bargain farm complex, composed of the main two-story dwelling, associated outbuildings, and gardens, sat on a hilltop with a stunning view of the Potomac and the U.S. Capitol. It was surrounded by relatively untouched and undeveloped hills, fields, woods, and streams. It included abandoned tobacco farms, poor dirt roads, and lacked modern conveniences. A log dwelling, reconstructed by Alice Ferguson using some original materials, was sited slightly south of the primary dwelling with an additional frame guesthouse nearby. Most of the buildings in the complex, including the main house, had to be rebuilt. Alice Ferguson took over management of the farm and supervised the rebuilding of the main house. After

[67] Meringolo, "The Accokeek Foundation and Piscataway Park," 3; "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 2, College of Southern Maryland (CSM), Southern Maryland Studies Center, Accokeek Box 4.
[68] Wilbur Harvey Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park: A History of Legislation" (Accokeek Foundation 1979), 6; Meringolo, 4. See Alice L. L. Ferguson, *Adventures in Southern Maryland, 1922-1940*. 1941 (Alice Ferguson Foundation, reprint 1957).

a devastating drought in the summer of 1930 destroyed her neighbors' crops she arranged to put most of them to work. Much of their work is visible today, including a small amphitheater set in a gravel pit.[69]

Henry and Alice Ferguson's interest in the archeological potential of Hard Bargain Farm began shortly after they purchased their property in 1922. The Fergusons quickly discovered they were sitting on top of valuable archeological resources. Each spring, the plowing along the river revealed new items. They began informally collecting artifacts as they took walks across their farm. Alice later wrote, "As soon as we had the farm we knew that archeology was there. We never went down to the river without coming home with arrow heads and little fragments of pottery." She and Henry would empty their archeological "treasures" into a bushel basket.[70]

After local children disturbed a prehistoric trash pit, the Fergusons took steps to limit amateur collecting by locals. Alice Ferguson decided that there should be a professional dig and sought a museum or university willing to fund and conduct one. Though she found little interest among professional archeologists from museums or universities, by the 1930s several amateur archeologists, including Judge William Graham, Howard MacCord, and Carl Manson, were collecting artifacts from the Piscataway Creek area. However, it was Alice and Henry Ferguson who conducted the most significant amateur work of the 1930s, unearthing major pre- and post- colonial American Indian sites. An amateur archeologist herself, Alice Ferguson decided to personally oversee excavations of the Potomac River shoreline between Accokeek Creek, Mockley Point, and Clagett's Cove. Ferguson contracted several "colored laborers" to assist with the fieldwork.[71] Perhaps as one of the laborers, or as a volunteer, Chief Turkey Tayac of the Piscataway tribe, living locally in Charles County at the time, would appear at the site and participate in the excavations. According to Moyaone residents, Tayac often performed ceremonial dances at the site to emphasize his own ancestral connections to the land. However, Tayac's presence was generally dismissed by the white residents of the Moyaone as an amusing spectacle.[72]

In 1935 she identified a major historic Piscataway village and began to excavate what she believed to be "Moyaone," the village mapped by Captain John Smith during his expedition in 1608. She completed

---

[69] "Alice L.L Ferguson," *Women of Achievement in Prince George's County History*, 51, NACE Files; NRHP Registration Form, draft, 2011, 25, 6-7.
[70] Alice L. L. Ferguson, *Adventures in Southern Maryland, 1922-1940*. 1941 (Alice Ferguson Foundation, reprint 1957), 157.
[71] Ibid. 162
[72] Susan Thompson-Hoffman, Scott Odell. "Accokeek Oral History Interview with Nancy Wagner" April 6, 2002.

those excavations in 1939. The stockade village in fact was not Moyaone but a prehistoric Piscataway village, abandoned during the Late Woodland Period, before European contact.

From 1935 to 1939 there was extensive archeological excavation on parts of the land that would later be included in the park and many artifacts recovered. Some individual Indian burial sites were identified as well as mass internments. The most significant finds were on or near the Ferguson property. The Mockley Point area and the Susquehannock Fort were excavated in 1939 and 1940. Together these four separate archeological sites – the site believed to be the historic "Moyaone" village, an earlier stockade village in the southern portion of the Moyaone area, Mockley Point and the Susquehannock Indian Fort of 1675 – constitute the Accokeek Creek Site (later known as the Accokeek Creek Complex Site).[73]

Dr. Robert L. Stephenson later analyzed the artifacts that Alice Ferguson recovered in her excavation as part of his doctoral research at the University of Maryland. Due to the inadequacies of her archeological field methodology and techniques, Stephenson was limited in the amount of data he could derive from analyzing the artifacts.[74]

In the 1920s and 1930s then the Fergusons and a small group of friends had begun to take greater interest in the Accokeek area's archeological resources and agrarian culture. After Ferguson's death, Chief Turkey Tayac began to draw deeper ancestral associations to the Moyaone site and its artifacts, as other various stakeholders began the fight to protect the land from encroaching development. The multiple archaeological interests regarding the land would grow after World War II and plant critical seeds for the creation of Piscataway Park decades later.[75]

---

[73] NRHP Registration Form, draft, 2011, 3, 25-26; Potter, 1980, 10, NACE Files; Regional Director Jack Fish, NCR, to Chief, Congressional Liaison Division, March 17, 1978, NACE files: PISC Remains.
[74] Potter, 1980, 11.

KEY FIGURES IN THE 1950s and 1960s

Accokeek Foundation

- U.S. Representative Frances P. Bolton
- Dr. David E. Finley
- Dr. Henry G. Ferguson
- Wilbur Harvey Hunter, Jr.
- Robert W. Straus
- Charles F. Wagner, Jr

Alice Ferguson Foundation/Moyaone Association

- Dr. Henry G. Ferguson
- Alice L. L. Ferguson
- Charles F. Wagner, Jr
- Robert W. Straus

Mount Vernon Ladies' Association

- Mrs. Francis F. Bierne (Rosamond Randall Bierne)
- U.S. Representative Frances P. Bolton
- Charles C. (Cecil) Wall

National Park Service

- T. Sutton Jett, National Capital Parks
- J. Knox, National Capital Parks
- George B. Hartzog, Jr.
- Edward Kelly, National Capital Parks
- Ronald F. Lee, NPS, Chief of Interpretation
- Murray Nelligan, Historian
- Charles Porter, Chief Historian
- Harry Thompson, Regional Director, NCR
- Conrad Wirth, Director, NPS

CHAPTER 2

STEWARDS AND STAKEHOLDERS: ORGANIZING FOR PRESERVATION, 1945 –1960

The origins of today's Moyaone Reserve residential community inside Piscataway Park go back to the 1930s when a small group of Washington, DC, residents began to discover the appeal of the Potomac shoreline in Maryland in the Accokeek area. At the time Accokeek was a remote and rural area, accessible from Washington only by unpaved roads or the boats that ran from the wharves at Water Street in southwest DC to the small piers on the Potomac River and Piscataway Creek. For a number of years the area remained fairly isolated with a small agrarian population. However, this situation changed after World War II with the tremendous growth of the nation's capital, a dramatic population increase in the Washington area, and the flight to the suburbs similar to what cities in the country were experiencing after the war. The growing number of automobiles on the roads in the Washington area and the improved roads and bridges made this part of Southern Maryland increasingly accessible. These local residents joined forces after the war to preserve the more rustic environment that they had come to appreciate and launched the movement leading to the establishment of Piscataway Park.

Henry G. and Alice L. Ferguson and Post War Suburban Development

Suburban development then was a major factor in the growing interest in the Maryland shoreline of the Potomac River. It brought significant changes to the social organization and appearance of the national capital region during the 1930s and 1940s. With the influx of federal workers to support President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal program and later the war effort and the resulting need for additional housing, the population moved further out of the city and into planned suburbs. Part of the population moving to the suburbs after World War II sought the freedom of the countryside. Southern Prince George's County in Maryland became increasingly attractive to developers as the Washington population spread to the suburbs. Soon after the war's end the first waves of suburban sprawl reached the area.

As noted earlier, Henry and Alice Ferguson had already introduced their friends to the area before the war. Their Hard Bargain retreat sat on a hilltop surrounded by farmland, with a stunning view of the Potomac and the U.S. Capitol. Their good friend and later neighbor Robert Ware Straus, who would come

to play a leading role in the creation of Piscataway Park, later described it as "an ideal place for country entertaining."[1]

Hard Bargain continued to attract a unique group of Washington socialites, artists, and intellectuals seeking to escape the pace of Washington life. The Fergusons hosted a steady stream of visitors and some boarders at Longview, a small farm building nearby named for its extended scenic view that served as a guesthouse. Their close-knit group of regular guests included community organizer and publicist Robert Ware Straus, who had been one of former Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes's staffers, sculptor Lenore Thomas, and architect Charles Wagner. Straus had come to Washington in 1935 to write a book for Secretary Ickes. During that time, he and several friends rented a farm roughly twelve miles south of Washington near the northern junction of Piscataway Bay and the Potomac River. That summer as he explored further south to Fort Washington and Accokeek, he had his first encounter with the Fergusons. A few years later, he would return to Accokeek as a guest of the Longview group. In 1943, Straus married Thomas who had purchased property situated on Bryan Point Road near the Fergusons during the late 30s and built a studio. After the war, Straus built a house, which was designed by Charles Goodman for the couple as a wedding present. Straus and Thomas were amongst the first in that group to return to Accokeek, becoming leading figures in the community.[2]

After World War II, architect Charles Wagner also returned to Accokeek with a desire to settle along Piscataway Creek. He was instrumental in the planning and development of the Moyaone Reserve community. He designed houses within the Moyaone Reserve in a contemporary modernist style that recalled the principles and aesthetics of Frank Lloyd Wright. The large five acre lots within the reserve allowed Wagner to orient his houses to the natural features of the land, to the view, and to seasonal change.[3]

As suburban development crept closer to the Accokeek area, the Fergusons and their Longview friends decided to take action. Alice Ferguson began to buy up hundreds of acres of land around her property, calling her real estate venture the Moyaone Company after the Indian village called Moyaone reported by early European explorers. Straus and Wagner were among the first to buy property. After the war, the

---

[1] Wilbur Harvey Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park: A History of Legislation," Accokeek Foundation 1979, 6; Meringolo, "The Accokeek Foundation and Piscataway Park," 4; Robert Ware Straus, *The Possible Dream: Saving George Washington's View* (Accokeek Foundation, 1988), 8.
[2] Meringolo, "The Accokeek Foundation and Piscataway Park,"4; Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 7-8.

[3] National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Registration Form, Piscataway Park, draft, 2011, 7.

Fergusons, Straus, and Wagner continued to market and sell tracts of Moyaone property to a select group of friends and colleagues calling their community the Moyaone Reserve. Their venture drew a specific group of people to this area, primarily upper middle-class, white-collar professionals who had a deep and abiding appreciation for the land. They purchased the land with little restriction other than agreeing not to subdivide their land into tracts of less than five acres.[4]

In 1946, Alice Ferguson purchased a nearby 800-acre tract called "Bond's Retreat" adjoining their property and began to sell lots of five acres or more to her friends, ultimately establishing a community. The first home in Bond's Retreat was built in 1947, and by 1952 nearly all the available land had been sold. After Bond's Retreat, Alice Ferguson's next real estate venture was in 1949 when she purchased another 120 acres known as Cactus Hill. This area was located directly across from Mount Vernon and stretched up a hill with a magnificent view of the river. Later, a new road was constructed that connected the site to Bond's Retreat and united the two sections of the community. The construction of homes in the area began, though slowly because of shortages of materials after the war, and banks unwilling to finance loans for home construction in wooded, rural areas.[5]

Meanwhile, road connections between Accokeek and Washington, DC, continued to improve. Officials opened a new and more direct route across the new South Capitol Street Bridge in Washington in 1949, connecting it with the new Indian Head Highway. Crews paved Bryan Point Road in 1951. All these improvements shortened the commuting time between Washington, DC, and Accokeek and brought the Bond's Retreat and Cactus Hill communities within comfortable driving distance for commuters.[6]

Moyaone Reserve and Association

When Alice Ferguson died in 1952, she left her Maryland real estate holdings to Straus, Wagner, and the other Moyaone residents. At a special meeting on April 27, 1952, Henry Ferguson informed the residents that his wife had intended that these properties be used to benefit the community they had established, to include those in Bond's Retreat and Cactus Hill. The residents formed a temporary planning committee made up of Straus¸ Wagner, and others. This committee produced a report reflecting the commitment to environmental quality that had originally attracted residents to the area. The committee recommended

[4] Meringolo, "The Accokeek Foundation and Piscataway Park,"4; "History of the Accokeek Foundation," n.d., College of Southern Maryland (CSM) Accokeek Box 4.
[5] Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park" (1979), 6; Meringolo, "The Accokeek Foundation and Piscataway Park,"4; "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 2, CSM Accokeek Box 4.
[6] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 2.

developing the remaining land as a community of permanent residents who would live on house sites of at least five acres and retain the open and wooded character of the landscape.[7]

The residents of Bond's Retreat and Cactus Hill thus inherited all the unsold land in these areas as well as the mortgages and notes on the lands sold, a gift worth roughly $40,000 at the time. Henry Ferguson proposed that the properties be conveyed for the benefit of the community as a whole. Meanwhile, the residents recognized the increasing need for concerted action on schools, roads, police and fire protection, and other common services. They also needed an organization to absorb Alice Ferguson's gift. Slowly an objective and a draft corporate charter evolved. In December 1952, Moyaone residents formed a new corporation called the Moyaone Company (later called the Moyaone Association), to accept and manage Alice Ferguson's bequest, and to guide the growth of the area. Its purpose was to engage in community development in the areas of Bond's Retreat and Cactus Hill and other sites in the Accokeek vicinity, to guide the growth of these areas and formulate policies related to community development, and to work directly or with other community groups to further the interests of the community. Membership was open to all Moyaone residents and landowners.[8]

A small group of Moyaone residents drafted a corporate charter for the new Moyaone Company that would carry the five acre restriction to a broader area by buying additional land and developing it under covenants so it could not be divided into parcels smaller than five acre tracts. The tracts also could not be used for any purpose other than single family houses, and the natural beauty of the land had to be preserved. Wagner, Straus, and another resident Dr. Marshall T. Newman, were among the original organizers of the corporation, and Straus became the first president. The charter provided that the corporation be organized as a non-profit. Any profit was to be spent for education and some civil amenities. The final authority on all matters pertaining to the company's activities rested with its members.[9]

It is important to note that not everyone living along the Accokeek shoreline between the historic Marshall Hall and Piscataway Creek was a resident of the Moyaone community. Some of the local farming

---

[7] Hunter, 6.

[8] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 2, CSM Accokeek Box 4; "Chronology of Moyaone Activities Relating to Preservation of the Waterfront and other Low-Density Character of Development," n.d., CSM Accokeek Box 4; Hunter, 6-7. The original group of residents of the Moyaone Reserve would form a number of companies and non-profit organizations to manage the Moyaone area during the first two decades. At various times these went by the name Moyaone Company, later renamed Moyaone Association. See www.moyaone.org

[9] Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 11-12; "Moyaone Company Purposes Organization and Operations History," n.d., MVLA Smith Overview 3.

families owned large parcels situated alongside the Moyaone Reserve, and they became increasingly uneasy as the Moyaone population increased. Although they could appreciate the character of the landscape, they also viewed the land as an evolving resource and saw potential benefits in the postwar suburban development. The two groups would at times find themselves at odds over the value and future of the Accokeek landscape.[10]

The Moyaone Company held its first meeting on February 21, 1953, with 17 of the 22 landowners in Bond's Retreat and Cactus Hill in attendance. The attendees approved the company's articles of incorporation, which laid out the purposes for which the company had been formed. First, the company would engage in community development in the areas of Bond's Retreat and Cactus Hill and neighboring areas in the Accokeek vicinity. Second, it would manage the growth of these areas and formulate policies relating to community development as well as work with private and public organizations in future projects. Third, the company would directly or in cooperation with other community groups advance the general interests of the community in education, recreation, public health, providing utilities and general services, and the economic and social development of areas where the company might have a direct or indirect interest. The company's by-laws provided for an elected board of directors, but the members would be the final authority on all matters related to company activities.[11]

In its first year of operation, the Moyaone Company focused on improving its organizational structure and studying proposed future projects. Meanwhile, its members were seeing a surge in the real estate market in the Accokeek area, which they recognized could be either beneficial or detrimental to their community. As they watched this trend carefully, the group became more determined to undertake real estate operations on a sufficiently large scale to meet the long-range objectives of its members.

Concerns about the expanding real estate development in the area deepened in 1953 when a 245-acre farm adjoining the Bond's Retreat, known as the Carter Farm, came up for sale. Moyaone members worried that this tract of land would end up in the hands of a small-lot real estate developer anxious to make a quick profit. The other option was for the company to buy the land as part of its long-range plan to preserve the area. Using Alice Ferguson's $40,000 gift and Henry Ferguson's financial guarantees, the company quickly purchased the land, which became Apple Valley. The company adopted a policy of establishing a land use covenant to go along with the titles for the sales from the Carter Farm and other

[10] Meringolo, 6.
[11] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 2-3.

unsold lands. This covenant prohibited lot sizes of less than five acres as well as having more than one house on each lot to protect the existing natural features. The desire of the residents to preserve the "open and wooded character" of the environment now became official policy for the community.[12] During the winter of 1954-1955, the five-member real estate committee that the company had set up to complete the survey of the Carter Farm property and provide for its eventual division and sale prepared plans for the development and sale of that property.[13]

Alice Ferguson Foundation Established

In March 1954 Henry Ferguson informed the Moyaone Company that he planned to leave his Hard Bargain property to the company in his will. He also wanted to immediately transfer a cottage on his property for the community to use as a nursery school. The company announced this decision to its members at its second annual meeting on March 19, 1954. The company now recognized that meeting future tax requirements on Henry Ferguson's bequest presented some challenges that would require legal expertise. The meeting's participants adopted a resolution to enlist the services of a law firm that specialized in handling tax problems involving community organizations.

In early July 1954, the law firm that the company had consulted with on tax issues provided a report laying out the various types of organizations that the Moyaone Company could set up to secure the most efficient use of its capital and maximize its benefits under the existing tax structure. The report first recommended transferring the contract to buy Carter Farm to a newly created business corporation. It also recommended that the Moyaone Company amend its charter so that it could qualify as a non-profit civic league. Finally, the report recommended that the company establish an exclusively educational and charitable organization to provide oversight of Hard Bargain and all the other lands that Henry Ferguson left to the community. The members considered these proposals at a meeting later that month, deciding not to change the company's charter at that time and rejecting the report's recommendation about setting up a separate business corporation. They concluded that asking volunteers to administer three separate units was simply too overwhelming for their small organization.[14]

The Moyaone Company's real estate operations continued to flourish during its first few years, and the group acquired additional acreage for carefully controlled development in five-acre parcels. However, the

---

[12] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 2 -3; Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park," 7; Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 12.
[13] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 5.
[14] Ibid. 4.

group's profitable real estate operations also forced its board to revisit the issues related to taxes. In addition, the situation had changed dramatically in those first few years. The company now had a general manager and a sales manager, a publicity manager, engineering, legal and real estate consultants, and an area office in Accokeek that could handle real estate sales independent of the other company operations.[15]

The group ultimately established three interrelated organizations to administer Henry Ferguson's gift. The Moyaone Company became the Moyaone Association, a nonprofit group responsible for establishing common areas, issuing a community newsletter, and enforcing community standards. Second, as the lawyer had recommended, the members decided to establish a fully taxable subsidiary business corporation, a real estate company called the Piscataway Company, which would handle the real estate related activities, to include advertising available lots and interviewing potential buyers. Finally, they established a third organization called the Alice Ferguson Foundation as a nonprofit, tax exempt and tax-deductible entity devoted specifically to increasing local education opportunities by funding college scholarships for students to become teachers in the local area. It was not long before the benefits of studying the local habitats at Hard Bargain Farm were realized, and students began to come to the farm to learn about them. Over time the role of the three organizations as conservation entities would become more formalized and residents would agree to strict residential covenants that prevented unnecessary clearing of the woods and prohibited apartment buildings, billboards, and storefronts.[16]

At their October 19, 1956 meeting, the members resolved to establish the Piscataway Company to handle the real estate function and business transactions. This left the parent company, the Moyaone Association, with the policy control and civic interests of the Moyaone Reserve and the Accokeek area. They also appropriated funds to establish a recreation area next to the Nursery School, as well as funds for the construction of a playing field, a paved play area, and parking spaces, and for an engineering study of a swimming pool to be built when they could raise sufficient funds. The association urged all the early landowners in the Moyaone Reserve to adopt the land use covenants that were already in effect in the newly purchased properties.[17]

At that October meeting, members also discussed the issue of imposing covenants on the property in Bond's Retreat and Cactus Hill. When the Fergusons had originally conveyed the land, no covenants had

---

[15] Ibid., 6.
[16] Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 14; Meringolo, 5; Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park," 10.
[17] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 6-7; Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park," 8.

been imposed other than the landowners agreeing not to sell their land in lots smaller than five acres. In theory there was nothing to prevent landowners from putting their land to commercial use. In view of the strict covenants that the company had put in place in the newer developments, the board concluded that the entire Moyaone Reserve should be governed by similar covenants and the board later adopted those covenants.[18]

As the Moyaone Reserve residents worked to organize more effectively, during the summer of 1954 the community once again faced a serious threat of development. Startled residents discovered work crews from the F. & S. Construction Company drilling holes along Bryan Point Road, crossing property lines and blazing trees. The construction company planned to construct more than 1,000 houses near Highway 301 for a development called Hoffman City. Moreover, the developer was proposing to discharge rain sewage from this housing project into the Potomac River through Accokeek Creek. The threat of sewage flowing through the middle of the community prompted a quick response from the Moyaone Association leaders, and concerned members contributed to an emergency fund of $1,000 to fight the action in court if necessary.[19] National Park Service officials, who were showing increasing interest in the area, also learned about the plans for sewage disposal into the Potomac River and expressed their concern.[20]

The Hoffman City threat prompted the Moyaone members to join with other groups in the Accokeek area that were equally concerned about further pollution of the Potomac River, including the Accokeek Citizens Association, the Accokeek Parent Teachers' Association, the Citizen's Association of Calvert Manor, the Isaac Walton League, and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association (MVLA). Together these groups persuaded the Maryland State Health Department to intervene. As a result, Maryland officials changed the State regulations to require posting of a performance bond on sewage treatment. Although the sewer project was defeated through public pressure and the project abandoned, these groups recognized the need for larger plans to deal with the threat of future development.[21]

---

[18] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 7.
[19] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 4; Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park," 8; Chronology of Moyaone Activities Relating to Preservation of the Waterfront and other Low-Density Character of Development,"n.d., CSM Accokeek Box 4; *"History of the Accokeek Foundation,"* n.d., CSM Accokeek Box 4.
[20] Ronald F. Lee, Chief, Division of Interpretation to Charles C. Wall, January 20, 1955, MVLA Charles Cecil Wall papers (CCW) PR Files NPS.
[21] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 4; Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park," 8; Chronology of Moyaone Activities Relating to Preservation of the Waterfront and other Low-Density Character of Development," n.d., CSM Accokeek Box 4.

Though the incident was alarming, it had some positive effects as well. The experience fostered greater cooperation within the local community and brought the Moyaone members into closer contact with the MVLA, which had the same deep concern with preserving the natural character and landscape on the Maryland side of the Potomac. During that summer of 1954 the administrator of Mount Vernon visited the Moyaone community for the first time and was impressed with the group's ongoing efforts in maintaining the area of Bond's Retreat and Cactus Hill in five-acre or larger lots for residential purposes.[22]

Mount Vernon Ladies' Association Role

In the mid-1950s the MVLA would become the Moyaone Association's most reliable and visible champion in the effort to protect the landscape and undertake a massive campaign to promote the value of the view from Mount Vernon as a scenic and historic backdrop associated with the first president. The MVLA launched a major effort to protect the viewshed called "Operation Overview" under the leadership of Republican Congresswoman Frances Payne Bolton. Frances Payne Bingham was born in 1885 in Cleveland, Ohio, and married Chester Castle Bolton a prominent banker and industrialist in 1907. Chester Bolton served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Ohio's 22nd District. When he passed away in 1940 during his fifth term, Frances Payne Bolton was appointed to serve out the remainder of his term. She then was elected and reelected, ultimately serving 11 consecutive terms until 1968.

In 1938 Bolton had been elected vice regent for Ohio of the MVLA and served in that position for decades. By the early 1950s she had become deeply concerned about the threat posed by the Hoffman City project. She was determined to preserve the Potomac River from further pollution and to protect the view from Mount Vernon. With this objective in mind, she proposed to introduce a bill in Congress to acquire land for a park and sought the support of the Moyaone Association in this undertaking. Since the properties of several Moyaone Association members would have been affected by the proposed legislation, officials polled the membership by mail to solicit their opinions on the proposal to create a park. The association members discussed the issue at length at their fourth annual meeting on March 9, 1955, and the board assured the attendees that it would not endorse any plan that failed to protect the properties of residents that could be seen from Mount Vernon.[23]

[22] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 4.
[23] Ibid., 5.

This image from a Christmas card sent by Rep. Frances Bolton highlights the historic view of the park across the river from Mount Vernon *(Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association)*

In 1955, the growing preservation concerns on both sides of the Potomac River took on even greater urgency when it appeared that a roughly 485 acre tract of waterfront property and farmland at the end of Bryan Point Road bordering the Moyaone Reserve and visible from Mount Vernon, owned by Vaughn Connolly, was going to be put up for sale. The Moyaone residents had long been concerned about the threat of development at what was known as Connelly Farm and had hoped to buy the property, but the half million dollar asking price was too steep. In 1955 word got out that a major oil company was considering the Connolly Farm as a potential site for an oil tank farm for transshipment from the river to land transportation. Charles Wagner of the Moyaone community quickly contacted MVLA Resident Director Charles Cecil Wall with the news. Like Bolton, Wall who had been at Mount Vernon since 1937 came to play an increasingly important role in the MVLA effort to preserve the viewshed. Alarmed by the news about Connolly Farm, Wagner and Wall met with the National Capital Parks assistant

superintendent, Harry T. Thompson. The three men met again later at Mount Vernon to discuss the matter further. While Thompson was supportive, he cautioned that getting the necessary legislation to create a national park through Congress could take years or never happen at all.[24]

Wall found a strong ally in Wagner who had approached him to discuss their mutual interest in preserving the Maryland shoreline. Through Wagner, Wall would come to know both Robert Straus from the Moyaone Association and Henry Ferguson. In early May 1955, Wall informed Bolton that Wagner had had lunch with Vaughan Connolly "the owner of about five hundred acres immediately opposite Mount Vernon and the man who first crystalized our interest in preservation of the status quo on the other shore."[25] Connelly reportedly had given an option on his land to Texas investors who would develop his land for high-priced residential housing, potentially to include a club house designed as a replica of Mount Vernon. Wall added that Wagner had expressed doubts that the Department of the Interior would purchase the land with funds appropriated by Congress at the present time, and suggested that the MVLA work with a charitable organization to purchase the Connolly land and hold it until Congress provided the NPS with the funds it needed for acquisition. Wagner had urged MVLA to seek such a sponsor.

Wall had spoken to NPS Chief of Interpretation Ronald F. Lee several times, and Lee had reported that the proposal for a park in this area had some support. Lee went on to explain that only other pressing engagements had prevented the NPS Director Conrad Wirth from contacting Bolton personally to discuss the matter. Wall conveyed the urgency of the situation, since land values would no doubt increase with the real estate speculation. He closed by emphasizing how frequently visitors to Mount Vernon praised the view across the river.[26]

In his role with the MVLA, Wall was well aware of earlier NPS efforts to preserve the view along the George Washington Memorial Parkway and its interest in preserving the Mount Vernon cultural landscape. In 1928 Congress had authorized the creation of George Washington Memorial Highway. With the 1930 Capper-Crampton legislation it had authorized the George Washington Memorial Parkway, which included the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and ran along the Virginia side of the Potomac to Mount Vernon. Wall quickly contacted the Department of the Interior about the proposed land sale. Meanwhile, Wagner searched for a private buyer who would be willing to adhere to the Moyaone

---

[24] Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 16-17, 19; Meringolo, 7; History of the Accokeek Foundation," n.d., CSM Accokeek Box 4, 2-3. The oil tank farm was never built.
[25] Charles C. Wall, Resident Superintendent to Mrs. Chester Bolton, May 4, 1955, MVLA Overview Box 1.
[26] Ibid.

Reserve's existing land covenants. Throughout the spring of 1955 Wall and Wagner continued to discuss their shared concerns and their mutual interest in protecting the character of the Accokeek shoreline, considering various options, from private to federal intervention. Through their combined efforts, the two men initiated a process that would ultimately lead to the creation of Piscataway Park.[27]

Wall and the others understood that preserving the Accokeek land would require significant financial resources, and they also knew that the Rockefeller family had a long tradition of contributing to and supporting the establishment of new national park units with their financial resources. In early June 1955, Bolton, Lee, and Thompson met with representatives of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in New York, a philanthropic foundation created and run by members of the Rockefeller family, to seek financial support, but they were unable to secure that patronage. Wall was also doubtful that Congress would provide a timely appropriation to purchase Connolly's farm despite NPS support for its acquisition.[28]

For some years, Bolton had held a deep appreciation for the historical significance of the view from Mount Vernon and now Wall encouraged her to take a more active role. When the MVLA and the Moyaone group failed to find another buyer, Bolton decided to purchase the Connolly property with her own financial resources in order to protect the Mount Vernon viewshed from any intrusive development. In mid-summer 1955, she entered into negotiations with Vaughn Connolly for the purchase of his 485-acre tract. She signed the contract on August 10, 1955, agreeing to purchase approximately 485 acres known as Bryan's Landing, Bryan Point, and Hansington Manor for $300,000.[29]

Knowing that she would soon be sailing to Africa on an extended study mission for the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Bolton amended her will to ensure that if she passed away while overseas the land would go to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately funded non- profit organization to protect and promote historic places, to hold until the NPS was finally in a position to receive it. The Trust agreed.[30]

Though the negotiations for the property were challenging until the very end and there was some resistance from Connolly, the real estate transaction was completed on August 22, while Bolton was

---

[27] Meringolo, 7.
[28] John Sprinkle, Jr., "Vision & Values: Operation Overview and the Creation of Piscataway Park," draft, NPS 2016, 4; MVLA Monthly Report, Mrs. Albert Harkness, MVLA Regent, July 5, 1955, MVLA Monthly 1955.
[29] Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 20.
[30] Charles C. Wall to Frederick L. Rath, Jr., Director, National Trust for Historic Preservation, August 11, 1955, MVLA overview Box 1; H. Alexander Smith to Mrs. Bolton, August 18, 1955, MVLA Overview Box 1.

enroute to Africa. Despite her best efforts to minimize publicity, while Bolton was in Africa the press discovered that she had purchased the Maryland property and MVLA received a flood of phone inquiries. Her purchase would help launch her career and establish her reputation as an advocate for land conservation and historic preservation.[31] Wall later told the MVLA members that he considered Bolton's gift to be "the greatest contribution to Mount Vernon since the purchase of the estate by Mrs. Cunningham." MVLA Regent Mrs. Francis F. Beirne in turn gave Wall credit for "the good feeling that now existed between the different interested groups."[32]

Soon after Bolton's return from Africa, Straus contacted her to express the Moyaone Association's interest in the land that she had purchased from Connolly and to highlight their common interest in preserving the Maryland shore. Bolton responded quickly, inviting Straus to meet with her. Straus used the opportunity to provide her with the history of the Moyaone Association's preservation efforts and outline its future plans. The two advocates agreed that the entire section of shore between Piscataway Bay and Marshall Hall should be "brought under control" to protect it from development.[33] Thus began a very effective, more than decade-long relationship of shared vision and mutual respect and support.

Bolton also consulted with Henry Ferguson, Wagner, Straus, and a few other advisors along with other Moyaone residents about how to dispose of her recently-acquired riverfront farm and how to develop a plan to ensure the permanent protection of the Accokeek landscape and the view from Mount Vernon. She suggested giving the property to the NPS as a public park, but there were a number of other options to consider. The Moyaone Association's board of directors polled their membership on this issue in December 1955 and received a range of responses. A lively debate ensued at the board's January 6, 1956, meeting at Mount Vernon when Cecil Wall presented the arguments for creating a public park on the lands opposite Mount Vernon. The Moyaone Association finally adopted a resolution supporting the development of a plan for a waterfront park, as long as the interests of the company and its members were protected.[34]

Both the Moyaone Reserve representatives and Representative Bolton recognized the need for a more comprehensive approach. Private purchase alone would not be enough to protect the landscape. Bolton

---

[31] Charles C. Wall to Bolton, August 23, 1955, MVLA overview Box 1; MVLA Monthly Report, Mrs. Albert Harkness, MVLA Regent, July 5, 1955, MVLA Monthly 1955; Sprinkle, 4.
[32] MVLA, Minutes of the Council, October 1958, 15.
[33] Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 22.
[34] Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park," 10; Meringolo, 8.

gave the Moyaone Association a $5,000 grant to develop a strategic plan, and Straus hired his friend and fellow New Dealer Frederick A. Gutheim as a consultant. Gutheim was a well-known city planner and conservationist. He had been impressed with the preservation of the countryside that he had seen during his travels in England. Gutheim recommended the creation of a single nonprofit entity to represent the various parties, to include the Alice Ferguson Foundation, Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Moyaone Association, and National Park Service, that were interested in saving the property from development. He favored creating a working landscape that preserved not only the pastoral view from Mount Vernon, but also a productive farm. Acting on Gutheim's recommendation, Straus pushed the Moyaone Association to create yet another nonprofit entity that would hold private lands in trust and educate the public about the importance of conservation.[35]

Accokeek Foundation Created

Bolton was determined to convey her land to a non-profit foundation with an American Indian name, thus the name "Accokeek." The Accokeek Foundation was incorporated on April 10, 1957, as a nonprofit entity. Its charter clearly stated that the fundamental purpose of the Foundation was "to preserve, protect and foster, for scientific, educational or charitable use and study for the benefit of the people of the nation, the historic sites and relics, trees, plants and wildlife," which were rapidly disappearing from an area of natural beauty along the Maryland shore of the historic Potomac River. Under the charter, it would acquire, by gift, purchase, or other means, and maintain as much of the real property in Prince George's and Charles counties in Maryland as it became available and appropriate to preserve the existing wooded and open character of the approaches to Washington, DC , along the Potomac River and Piscataway Creek. To the extent appropriate, the Accokeek Foundation would consult and cooperate with various public and private organizations, to include the Smithsonian Institution, the National Zoological Park, the Audubon Society, the National Park Service, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Alice Ferguson Foundation.[36]

Bolton thus created the Accokeek Foundation to oversee efforts to stabilize the view across the Potomac. The Accokeek Foundation became one of the nation's earliest land trusts. She agreed to serve as the Foundation's first president, further cementing the partnership between the MVLA and the Moyaone

[35] Meringolo, 8; Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 23-24; William Corkern, "A Service of Lasing Value: Frances Bolton, Robert Ware Straus, and the Accokeek Foundation," March 28. 2011, 5.
[36] Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park," 11; Accokeek Foundation, Brochure, "The Accokeek Foundation," MVLA Smith Overview 3.

Association. Her passion, skills, and experience in Congress, Straus later observed, proved extremely valuable. In April 1957, Bolton invited David E. Finley, one of the founders of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to serve on the Foundation's first board of trustees. After laying out the objectives of the Foundation, she assured Finley that they would keep the demands on his time to a minimum and would not require any "speech making or financial support." She explained that they sought only his advice and counsel and the prestige his position would bring to the organization. Finley graciously accepted. [37]

Other trustees included Henry Ferguson and Wagner. Bolton invited Wall to serve on the Foundation's Advisory Committee. Initially, the Foundation avoided any public recognition for its land acquisition program, fearing that publicity would drive up land values. The Foundation changed this approach when it learned that property values had risen 30 percent during the first two years of its operation and because of new threats of development. Bolton also signed a general management contract with Galaxy Incorporated, a consulting firm headed by Straus.[38]

Reflecting their shared interests and concerns, at its first meeting in April 1957, the Acccokeek Foundation's board of trustees decided that the presidents of the Alice Ferguson Foundation and the Moyaone Company should be elected to the Accokeek Foundation's board to help coordinate the activities of those organizations. The organizers approved the organization's by-laws. The Foundation would preserve and protect the waterfront areas, and the Moyaone Association would take the excess lands back from the waterfront, place them under suitable restrictions so that their use would further the goal of preserving and protecting the waterfront lands, and dispose of them to supporters of the plan.[39]

The Accokeek Foundation's board of trustees, which included Bolton, Finley, Wagner, C. B. Schafer, and Ferguson, met at Ferguson's home in early May 1957. Robert Straus, Theodore Owen, George Baker, Harry Lamberton, Frederick Gutheim, and Carolyn Agger also attended the meeting. The trustees reviewed and adopted by-laws for the organization and appointed Bolton as president and Wagner as vice president. Then Gutheim presented the attendees with his suggestions for preserving the "wooded and open character" of the Mount Vernon viewshed. He pointed out that the visual stabilization of the

---

[37] Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 24; Frances P. Bolton to David E. Finley, Chairman, Commission of Fine Arts, Department of the Interior, April 11, 1957, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, David E. Finley Papers (LOC Finley) Finley Box 1; Finley to Bolton, April 18, 1957, ibid.
[38] Sprinkle, 5; Meringolo, 8; Wall to Bolton, July 24, 1957, MVLA Smith Overview 3; "The Accokeek Foundation," brochure, n.d. MVLA Smith Overview 3; Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 25.
[39] Straus, *The Possible Dream,* 24-25; "History of the Accokeek Foundation," n.d., 3, CSM Accokeek Box 4.

area with regard to the view from Mount Vernon could not be maintained without planning and action and that the population in the area had grown by 150 percent in the past five years which raised the risk of unwanted development. He suggested that to stabilize the river front and back areas, the Foundation should develop different types of open space land use in cooperation with the appropriate public and private organizations. The trustees discussed the possibility of starting a wildlife development program in one of the swampy areas. Finally, the trustees resolved to accept the gifts of the privately owned riverfront Auburn property and Bolton's riverfront farmland from Bolton. They also resolved to accept the donation of $2,000 from the Moyaone Company to complete the study that Gutheim had undertaken. Third, it resolved to start a wildlife development area and bird sanctuary "as soon as practicable."[40]

Straus, Wagner, and others began to draft a more detailed program for the new Accokeek Foundation based on the work of the previous decade. They envisioned very careful environmental considerations with a minimum of active recreational interests. The area would include a bird sanctuary, wildlife refuge, nature trails, with possible use of some of the land as an arboretum and a zoological park, an activity area for the Girl Scouts and similar groups, and a historical farm operation. The Foundation's board of trustees later approved these plans at its first meeting in May 1957. At that point Bolton turned over her Bryan Point property, the Connolly Farm, to the Accokeek Foundation. In the months and years ahead she would purchase and donate other lands as well.[41]

While the Moyaone Association viewed Bolton's gift of the Connolly property to the Accokeek Foundation as a great advance for their plan, some residents of the affected area objected out of fear that property values would decline. A Foundation report noted, "This opposition was galvanized into such a form that it apparently would seriously threaten a park project in the foreseeable future." However, the Moyaone group remained optimistic, and Bolton's interest remained strong.[42]

After the Accokeek Foundation received its charter, Straus and Bolton reached an agreement on the extent of lands that should be purchased to ensure protection of the Maryland shore across from Mount Vernon. A further agreement among Bolton, the Moyaone Association, and the Piscataway Company real estate arm provided that the Piscataway Company would purchase from Bolton the lands not immediately fronting the river and place them under the five-acre covenants that the Moyaone

---

[40] Accokeek Foundation, Carolyn Agger, Secretary, Minutes of Meeting of Board of Trustees of the Accokeek Foundation, Inc., May 6, 1957, LOC Finley Box 1.
[41] Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park," 11-12.
[42] "History of the Accokeek Foundation," 2-3.

Association was already using. They would then sell the covenanted parcels to enlarge the community and repay Bolton for the note she had accepted in payment for the property. If not for the generous agreement, the Piscataway Company would not have had sufficient resources to purchase the property. It is important to note that the Piscataway Company faced some resistance in its real estate purchases. Not all landowners along the six mile stretch of the Maryland waterfront were willing to sell their land.[43]

Meanwhile, the Moyaone Association continued to search for ways to protect the land within the Moyaone Reserve in perpetuity. Hopeful that zoning measures might protect open space and forest, Straus and others approached the Prince George's County government about including their community under the planning authority of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. In addition, both the Moyaone Association and the Accokeek Foundation explored ways to formalize the terms of the reserve's land covenants. In 1956 they began to study the potential effectiveness of using scenic easements, as discussed later.[44]

In early 1957 Gutheim began a comprehensive planning study to provide the Moyaone Association with a better understanding of the current and future growth of the Accokeek site. His study examined the changes in population, land use, and the economic base of the Accokeek area and also evaluated the impact of highways, bridges, and other proposed public works. It included a survey of open spaces and identified a series of open space uses suited to the area. The final part included recommendations for planning policy for the next five to fifteen years.[45]

In May 1957, Gutheim recommended that pending the completion of these planning studies, which would provide the framework for the new Accokeek Foundation's program, the Foundation should launch an interim program. This would allow the Foundation to begin work and illustrate the type of project in which it proposed to engage. Yet, at the same time, he recognized that only a limited number of projects could be undertaken without jeopardizing the Foundation's more comprehensive program. Gutheim also recommended establishing a wildlife conservation area. As a modest beginning, he said, the Foundation could immediately take steps to determine the boundaries for a conservation area and establish a detailed land management plan.[46]

---

[43] Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 28, 31.
[44] Meringolo, 8.
[45] Frederick Gutheim, "Overall Program for the Accokeek Foundation," May 1, 1957, CSM Accokeek Box 4.
[46] Gutheim, "An Interim Program for the Accokeek Foundation: First Year," May 1, 1957.

National Park Service Involvement

The interest of the NPS and its role in the area that would become Piscataway Park was limited until the early 1950s when it became an important partner with the MVLA. During the early stages of MVLA's effort to preserve the viewshed, Operation Overview, in the 1950s the NPS developed and considered various arguments that would support a potential federal role in preserving the Mount Vernon viewshed. In July 1953, NPS historian Murray Nelligan forwarded a memorandum on "Mockley Point" to the chief of the NPS Historic Sites Division. Nelligan reported that he had only recently become aware of the archeological significance of the area across Piscataway Creek from Fort Washington. He had also recently learned of Alice Ferguson's work on Fort Susquehannock on Piscataway Creek and her other archeological work at Mockley Point, as well as the recent archeological findings of Dr. Robert L. Stephenson from the University of Maryland related to the culture of the prehistoric people of Accokeek Creek. Nelligan went on to outline the significance of these archeological findings in detail and recommended that the NPS investigate the potential of Mockley Point as a historical site before the Washington suburbs that were expanding into Prince George's County overwhelmed the area.

Nelligan explained that as NPS officials investigated a potential federal role they should consider several major points. First, the Mockley Point area was now easily accessible from Washington, only a few miles in from Indian Head Highway on a paved road. Second, situated at a sharp bend in the Potomac, the site offered a "spectacular view" both up and down the river. Third, as a historical site dealing with the pre-Columbian and Colonial periods, it would open up an entirely new field for archeological and historical interpretation in the National Capital Parks, rounding out the region's coverage of all significant periods in American history. At Mockley Point, he added, school groups could hear about the prehistoric and colonial eras but also learn about archeological methods and objectives. The site also offered a stunning view both up the river to DC and down the river to Mount Vernon on the opposite shore.[47] In reference to Nelligan's third point, it is important to note that since the mid-1930s, the NPS had indeed been charged with creating a system of units that together could illustrate an orderly, comprehensive view of American history, and Nelligan's argument fit well with this effort.

[47] Acting Chief, Public Use Section (Murray Nelligan) to Superintendent, through Chief, National Memorials and Historic Sites Division, "Mockley Point, Prince Georges' County, Maryland," July 30, 1953, National Park Service, Park History Program records (NPS PHP).

Initially, NPS staff historian Charles Porter concluded that the resources at Mockley Point were what he termed "local history" and not worthy of further consideration.[48] However, Chief of Interpretation Ronald Lee, who had helped establish the National Historic Sites Survey of nationally significant properties during the late 1930s held a different view. Initially Lee wondered if there was "any authority" for the NPS to accept this kind of property if offered. Porter consulted further with the NPS archeologists and later concluded that the National Park System Advisory Board could declare the site of national significance under the National Historic Sites Act of August 21, 1935. The National Historic Sites Act had declared a national policy "to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States." To implement this policy, the act assigned broad powers and duties to the Secretary of the Interior and the NPS. They were to conduct surveys of historic properties to determine which ones had "exceptional value" as commemorating or illustrating the nation's history. The law authorized them to conduct research and to restore, preserve, and maintain historic properties directly or through cooperative agreements with others. It also authorized them to mark properties, establish and maintain related museums, and engage in other interpretive activities for public education, provided no federal funds were obligated in advance of congressional appropriations. This restriction effectively prohibited the addition of properties by Secretarial action alone.

The 1935 act provided for a historic sites survey that was institutionalized within the NPS as the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. The survey proved valuable in identifying potential new additions to the National Park System. Another product of the legislation was the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments (retitled the National Park System Advisory Board in 1978). This board used outside experts in the fields of cultural and natural resources to review selected properties and recommend those found nationally significant for Secretarial designation or inclusion in the National Park System. The Advisory Board's approval then was the first step in designation of a National Historic Site by the Secretary of the Interior. At the time, National Historic Sites could be under either private or government stewardship.[49]

In 1954 the NPS concept was to incorporate the Mockley Point site into the proposed parkway that would become part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway discussed earlier that ran down to Mount Vernon on the Virginia side of the Potomac. Porter remained concerned that what was currently an

---

[48] Charles W. Porter to Herb Kahler, September 17, 1953.

[49] National Park Service, *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (National Park Service, 2005), 51-52; Sprinkle, 3; Memo, Charlies Porter, Chief, Preservation Section, to Chief of Interpretation (Ronald Lee), "Mockley Point, near Fort Washington, MD," March 11, 1954, NPS PHP.

isolated area would be "'open to encroachment'" and that it would be hard to justify the cost of securing the site when the restoration and maintenance of Fort Washington was underfunded. Though NPS officials had expressed support for creating a national park at the Maryland site, time was limited, and in the mid-1950s it had neither the authorization nor the funding for the proposed park.

After discussing the matter with Nelligan, T. Sutton Jett, and A.J. Knox of National Capital Parks, in a March 1954 memo, Porter concluded that Mockley Point could not be acquired under existing legislation providing for the George Washington Memorial Parkway because the enabling act for that project made Fort Washington the southern terminus of the parkway and Mockley Point was nearly a mile further. He added that the only general legislation under which the property could be acquired was the Historic Sites Act. While the historical associations of Mockley Point and the archeological values of the area taken together might convince the Advisory Board to declare the site of national significance, the Advisory Board would have to balance that with the overall NPS program for acquiring archeological sites. Porter also questioned whether the Park Service should undertake these additional obligations and expenses "at a time when it finds it difficult to defray the cost of restoring and maintaining Fort Washington." At the same time, Porter conceded that unless these sites were acquired in the next few years, they would be lost to development. "It is a rugged dilemma we face," he concluded, but the times were not favorable to acquisition.[50]

Though it was the archeological resources at Mockley Point that first brought the Accokeek area to the attention of the NPS, federal officials soon focused their interest on its scenic qualities as well. In the summer of 1954, the superintendent of the National Capital Parks, Edward J. Kelly, forwarded a "'preliminary justification'" for the proposed "Accokeek Park," focusing on the area's "outstanding scenic values" as well as the significant archeological components. Kelly also highlighted the potential recreational value, and because of its proximity to nearby historical and recreational areas, "could serve as a focal point of the National Capital Parks interpretive program."[51]

In an effort to convey the urgency of the situation, Superintendent Kelly observed that the area was relatively undeveloped at the present time, but he warned that the situation could change rapidly as urban development spread to that part of Prince George's County. He first emphasized the area's scenic

---

[50] Memo, Charles W. Porter, Chief Preservation Section, to Chief of Interpretation, subj: Mockley Point, near Fort Washington, Maryland, March 11, 1954, NPS PHP.
[51] Sprinkle, 4; Superintendent Edward J. Kelly, Memo to The Director, National Park Service, July 2, 1954, subj: Preliminary Justification for the Proposed Accokeek Park, MVLA Overview Box 2.

value with the stunning views of the river and surrounding countryside and its historic vista across from Mount Vernon. Second, he highlighted its historical values. Mockley Point, at the northeast end of the proposed park, he explained, was one of the most important archeological sites in the East Coast and had historical associations with Captain John Smith, with Lord Baltimore and the first settlement of Maryland, and with the siege of the Susquehannock Indian Fort by colonial troops. In addition, the site had recreational values that would help respond to the growing demand for recreational facilities with the growing population of Prince George's County.[52]

Superintendent Kelly argued that the proposed park would help "round out" and enhance public use and interpretation of the other parks and historic sites in the area, those publicly and privately owned, such as Mount Vernon, Fort Hunt along the George Washington Memorial Parkway near Mount Vernon, and Fort Washington, and it would give National Capital Parks a group of diverse sites on both sides of the river that could be integrated by water transportation and grouped together as a single unit, under one name such as "The George Washington Memorial Park." A ferry could transport visitors across the river from one site to another. Kelly closed his memo by noting that the proposed sale of the 485-acre Connelly Farm directly across the river from Mount Vernon was "'key to the conservation and interpretation of an area of outstanding scenic and historic importance.'"[53]

Soon after Bolton had acquired the Connelly Farm in 1955, Wall and Ronald Lee had begun working together to develop a legislative formula to create a national park in the area. Initial internal planning documents for the park showed a visitor's center located along the south side of Piscataway Creek (near the site of the proposed sewage treatment plant), two areas set aside for group camping, and a foot trail along the entire shoreline.[54]

On June 1, 1955, Bolton met with Director Wirth, Lee, and Harry Thompson to discuss their mutual interest in preserving the Maryland shore across from Mount Vernon. Following up on that meeting, a few days later Wirth sent Bolton a long letter detailing the history and significance of the Mockley Point site and its consideration as a proposed park. With its proximity to historical and recreation sites in the

[52] Superintendent Kelly, Memo to The Director, National Park Service, July 2, 1954.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Sprinkle, 8.

Washington area, he said, it could serve as a "focal point" for a historical interpretive program. Therefore the land should be acquired "with the least possible delay."[55]

Wirth went on to emphasize the historical value of the Accokeek site. More than one million people a year enjoyed the "historic river view from this hallowed spot," he explained, and that view was important to future generations as well. In addition, Mockley Point, at the northeast end of the proposed park, was one of "the most important archeological sites in the East." In addition, the site had recreational values that would help respond to the growing demand for recreational facilities with the growing population of Prince George's County. Wirth echoed the words of Superintendent Kelly a year earlier in noting that the proposed park would enhance public use and interpretation of the other parks and historic sites in the area and give National Capital Parks a group of diverse sites on both sides of the river that could be integrated by water transportation and grouped together as a single unit.[56]

A few months later, Wall reported that Ronald Lee was "delighted" with Bolton's purchase of the Connolly Farm and was anxious to discuss future plans. Lee believed that with Bolton's active support Congress might be more receptive to proposed legislation based on the use of matching funds. With all of the favorable publicity surrounding this area, Lee agreed they could inform U.S. Representative Richard E. Lankford (D-MD) of their proposal. The area fell within Representative Lankford's Maryland district and his advocacy would be important. Wall met with Lankford and also spent time meeting with homeowners in the community whose support would be important.[57]

On November 4, 1955, T. Sutton Jett and another representative from National Capital Parks visited Bolton's new property with representatives from her office. After the tour, Wall had lunch with Bolton's representatives to discuss a plan of action. They agreed that the next step should be a meeting with NPS representatives to discuss the draft bill and a course of action leading to appropriate legislation at the coming session of Congress. They scheduled a meeting at the NPS director's office for November 17, 1955. The tentative draft bill that the NPS had prepared proposed to bring the park into being as an extension of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, for which there was already authorization on

[55] MVLA Monthly Report, Mrs. Albert Harkness, MVLA Regent, July 5, 1955, MVLA Monthly 1955; Conrad L. Wirth, Director NPS, to Frances Bolton, June 10, 1955, MVLA Overview Box 2.
[56] Conrad L. Wirth, Director NPS, to Frances Bolton, June 10, 1955, MVLA Overview Box 2.
[57] Wall to Marjorie Clough, Bolton's Administrative Assistant, September 27, 1955, MLVA Overview Box 1.

both sides of the river – Great Falls to Fort Washington on the Maryland shore and Mount Vernon to Great Falls on the Virginia side.[58]

The November 17 meeting with Director Wirth, Lee and Thompson from the NPS, Wall from MVLA and two members of Bolton's staff discussed the proposed bill. The participants agreed that the bill as currently written "would present undesirable complications." It would involve procuring matching funds from the state of Maryland, which they agreed was a contingency they should avoid. The NPS legislative staff would prepare a new bill based on decisions at the meeting and the group would reconvene later to consider this new draft. Wirth assured them that the merits of their proposal and the prospect of Bolton's contribution would help ensure favorable legislative action. The second step would be securing appropriations, but he remained optimistic about that as well.[59]

On December 14, 1955, Lee and Thompson representing Director Wirth met again with two of Bolton's representatives in Bolton's office. The participants agreed that the draft needed additional work and referred it back to the NPS legal staff. Lee hoped to have an acceptable draft for Bolton by the time she returned to Washington after the first of the year.

A week later, Wall met with Lee and Thompson for lunch at the historic Cosmos Club in downtown Washington along with Henry Ferguson and two representatives of the Moyaone Association. Wall conceded that the situation was "rather complex." Upon Henry Ferguson's death, the Alice Ferguson Foundation would come into possession of a large tract of land that included the site of the "Moyaone" Indian Village, and that area fell within the boundaries of the proposed park. Ferguson was also a patron of the Moyaone community, part of which was within the boundaries of the proposed park. The officers of the Alice Ferguson Foundation and the Moyaone Company were the same people. The entire Moyaone Association, Wall explained, saw great advantage to itself in the creation of the park and was in the position of being able to contribute substantially to its creation, but it did see potential risk if the NPS received blanket authorization to acquire as much as 2,000 acres. The lunch meeting, Wall said, was entirely "exploratory" and friendly. He reported, "It is recognized that there is a wide area of agreement and no serious conflict of purpose." However, he also conceded that the local residents wanted assurances regarding the land that might be difficult to meet.[60]

---

[58] MVLA Monthly Report, Mrs. Albert Harkness, MVLA Regent, December 1, 1955, MVLA Monthly 1955; Charles C. Wall to Mrs. Francis F. Beirne, November 9, 1955, MVLA VR Labouisse Operation Overview.
[59] Charles C. Wall to Mrs. Francis F. Beirne, Nov 17, 1955, MVLA VR Labouisse Operation Overview.
[60] Charles C. Wall to Mrs. Francis F. Beirne, December 22, 1955, MVLA VR Labouisse Operation Overview.

Meanwhile, in December 1955, the Moyaone Association's board of directors sent out a letter to residents laying out four possible positions the company could take related to the proposed park along the waterfront. On January 6, 1956, the board held a special meeting to follow up on this matter. At that meeting, Wall carefully laid out the history of the park proposal and emphasized its value in preservation of the area. Under the current plan, he explained, the park area would include the bottom lands and the question under consideration was how residents could protect their home sites on the hill slopes. Wall emphasized that the Moyaone Association and MVLA and the residents themselves were in a "strong" position to negotiate and would be able to get the protection against "other undesirable encroachment" that they could not get any other way. They would also be in a strong negotiating position to ensure against "undesired expansion of the park itself."

Attendees at the January meeting concluded that the park "would provide the maximum stabilization and better protection than could be provided by any other means." Wall expressed confidence that the park legislation would pass and offered no alternatives for protecting the area. The MVLA board resolved to assist in developing a plan for a waterfront park and to develop for property owned and controlled by the association and its members suitable covenants that would preserve the present aspect of lands that were not included in such a park. In return the NPS, which would control the park, would enter into appropriate agreements that reflected the interests of the Moyaone Association and its members "in all plans and activities which affect the park area or its surroundings."[61]

The MVLA and Bolton in particular clearly played a key role in drafting the proposed park legislation. In January 1956, there was a luncheon meeting at Mount Vernon, attended by Lee, Thompson, and six representatives of the Alice Ferguson Foundation and the Moyaone Association to define and develop the area of agreement between the NPS and the residents of the proposed park site on the Maryland shoreline.[62] In mid-December 1956, Bolton's staff again conferred with Thompson and another NPS representative. They discussed the revised draft of the park legislation and agreed to further revisions.[63] Over the next few years, the NPS and MVLA continued to work together to hammer out various drafts of proposed legislation for the park.

---

[61] Memo, Robert Ware Straus for My Fellow Members of the Moyaone Company, January 9, 1956, MVLA Smith Overview 3.
[62] MVLA Monthly Report, Memo to Mrs. Albert Harkness, Regent, MVLA, February 3, 1956, MVLA CCW Monthly 1956.
[63] MVLA Monthly Report, Memo to Mrs. Albert Harkness, Regent, MVLA, December 1956, MVLA CCW Monthly 1956.

In August 1956, Wall approached the Prince George's County Commissioners to gain their support and cooperation in preserving the view from Mount Vernon. At a meeting with county officials in Hyattsville, Maryland, he told them they had an opportunity "'to preserve one of the most beautiful spots in this part of the country'." The land south of Washington along the Maryland shore was being developed for home sites and MVLA wanted to stabilize the view for a roughly two mile stretch along the Potomac. The commissioners were also concerned about the view across the river from the George Washington Memorial Parkway and indicated their interest in preserving the area's natural beauty. However, they also opposed extensive purchases of land by the federal government because it would result in the reduction of taxable property. After expressing their concerns, they agreed to join Wall in a boat trip across the Potomac from Bolton's property to Mount Vernon to see the area firsthand.[64]

Accokeek Foundation Early Activities

As the various interest groups pursued ways to protect the Maryland shoreline, the young Accokeek Foundation vigorously pursued its plans and operations. Though its primary interest was preserving and ensuring suitable uses for the waterfront area, the Accokeek Foundation was also anxious to nurture the relationships that it had established in recent years with those individuals, agencies, and organizations that shared a common interest. Accokeek Foundation leaders carefully studied the various land uses under consideration. In 1957 the Accokeek Foundation's board approved the following series of activities and initiatives: establish a bird sanctuary and animal refuge area as part of a wildlife conservation program; complete arrangements for protecting the existing open and wooded character of the land owned by the Accokeek Foundation; establish an arboretum for horticultural development study; and create a museum for the preservation of historical material. While there were precedents for many of these specific activities in other foundations and institutions, Accokeek Foundation leaders believed their effort to organize these activities into a single plan was unique. They could find no direct precedent.[65]

The Accokeek Foundation's first task was to define the specific area in Accokeek and develop plans for its use. As the Foundation's leaders began to develop their plans, they were able to draw on the earlier 1956 planning studies conducted by the Moyaone Reserve. Recall that the Moyaone Association had published a comprehensive study of land use, population, recreation, conservation, and others for the land where

[64] "Mount Vernon Seeks to Keep Scenic View," *Star*, August 18, 1956, MVLA Smith Overview 3.
[65] The Accokeek Foundation Inc., Annual Report 1959 "The First Two Years," 2, LOC Finley, Box 1.

the Foundation was located. The Foundation used these studies as a base and began to supplement them with additional planning studies.[66]

At its March 1958 meeting, the Accokeek Foundation's board reported on the status of each of the major initiatives outlined above. The wildlife sanctuary area had been started, and the Foundation had cleared the trails enough that the Audubon Society had been able to use them for nature walks. It had awarded contracts for maintaining agriculture in the open areas as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other organizations had recommended. The Girl Scout Council had asked to use part of the Foundation's land as a campsite and an area to use for their conservation education program. The Foundation agreed to lease to the Girl Scouts a few acres of land and make some incidental improvements. Third, it had held discussions with the MVLA, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and with leading geneticists regarding the establishment of a museum devoted to the demonstration of strains of crops grown in colonial times. The Agricultural Historical Museum would also provide a basis and facilities for scientific work in the field of genetics in cooperation with organizations and individuals working in that field. The board concluded that this project warranted further study and authorized funds to hire experts who could help develop more concrete plans.

As for the arboretum proposal, the National Arboretum in Washington, DC, which had been established in 1923, needed room to expand. The Accokeek Foundation believed that providing a location for this expansion was consistent with its scientific and educational objectives and would complement the work of the planned Agricultural Historical Museum and the wildlife development sanctuary. The Arboretum Council had asked the Foundation to discuss the possible establishment of a National Arboretum extension on the Foundation's property. The board favored awarding a long term lease to the National Arboretum and asked the general manager to look into this. Much like the National Arboretum, the National Zoological Park also faced boundary limitations in the center of DC, and zoo officials liked the idea of having a site on the Maryland waterfront. The board agreed to study the matter further. The Foundation understood the need for balance. If it moved too quickly in buying up land, it could drive up real estate prices in the area, but if it moved too slowly, it would be caught in the price rise. Bolton encouraged the leaders to acquire additional land as rapidly as possible without encouraging a price increase.[67]

---

[66] Ibid.
[67] Draft Minutes of Meeting of March 7, 1958, Board of Trustees of the Accokeek Foundation, Mar 17, 1958, LOC Finley Box 2.

Following a resolution of its trustees on May 6, 1957, the Accokeek Foundation established three wildlife sanctuary areas totaling more than 307 acres and erected appropriate signage. Two years later wildlife sanctuary areas were well established and the State of Maryland Game and Inland Fish Commission had a waterfowl habitat improvement program underway there. With the development of these wildlife facilities, the Accokeek Workshop, sponsored by the Moyaone Reserve and the Prince George's County School System, undertook a nature study course on the Foundation lands. In addition, on March 7, 1958, the board of directors voted to lease approximately three acres to the Girl Scout Council of Southern Maryland to establish a camp site. The Foundation also provided funds for a water supply and for general maintenance of the camp site property.[68]

Leaders of the Accokeek Foundation explained that the National Arboretum was currently situated on an "inadequate site" to fulfill its educational mission and its scientific research. Since the Foundation was created in part to fulfill certain scientific and educational missions, the planning staff recommended that the Accokeek Foundation offer some of its land to the National Arboretum Advisory Council to be considered for its use for scientific experiments. The council passed a resolution recommending that the Secretary of Agriculture accept the Foundation's offer. The leaders made a formal offer to the Secretary of the Interior and entered negotiations. The Accokeek Foundation and the National Arboretum ultimately failed to reach an agreement [69]

National Colonial Farm

The Accokeek Foundation's early plans included establishing a national colonial farm and agricultural historical museum on its land. As the concept of a colonial farm and agricultural museum evolved, the Foundation needed a group to guide its development. Henry A. Wallace, former Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Commerce, Vice President of the United States, as well as a geneticist, became a regent of the National Colonial Farm Advisory Council. Other regents of the Advisory Council included Dean Gordon Cairns of the University of Maryland's School of Agriculture, Mrs. Hermann G. Place, chairman of the National Arboretum, and Dr. Richard H. Howland, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and later assistant secretary of the Smithsonian.[70]

---

[68] The Accokeek Foundation Inc., Annual Report 1959 "The First Two Years," 3-5, LOC Finley Box 1.
[69] Ibid., 6.
[70] Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 26.

The concept of an agricultural historical museum already had either input from or the endorsement of the NPS, MVLA, National Trust for Historic Preservation, University of Maryland, College of William and Mary, Colonial Williamsburg, and from geneticists and agricultural leaders around the world. Consulting museum experts and historians were developing plans for the museum. Designed to be a living museum, the farm would demonstrate 18th century agriculture and the setting would reflect that time period, with suitable buildings and fencing. Several stages of tillage would be on view at all times if possible. An introductory display would exhibit 18th century crops in contrast with modern ones, along with authentic equipment and related crafts.[71]

National Trust for Historic Preservation President Howland supported the idea of developing a portion of the Maryland shore as an outdoor exhibition area of 18th century farming. "There are comparatively few places in this country where a visitor may see crops growing that reflect a former pattern of agriculture," he explained. Along with the crops, a small exhibition of farming implements and tools would also be helpful. Visitors at Mount Vernon could cross the river "to see something of the 18th century countryman's way of life."[72]

In late October 1958, the Accokeek Foundation invited MVLA representatives to a tea, where Wilbur Harvey Hunter, Jr., director of the Peale Museum in Baltimore and a historical advisor to the Foundation, gave a presentation on the proposed Agricultural Historical Museum. Wall described the reaction of the guests as mixed. "These were not critical opinions," he reported to Bolton, "but I think they confirm your wisdom in not allowing the project to divert you from your major objective." Wall then expressed his confidence in Straus's ability to "make the enterprise stand on its own feet." He noted at the end that the vice-regents liked the idea of water transportation between Mount Vernon, Accokeek, and Fort Washington, and were "thrilled" by the scenic beauty of the river crossing.[73] In 1958, Hunter wrote "A Historical Research Report on the Proposed Agricultural Historical Museum." In February 1959, after consulting with experts in the field of history, agronomy, and genetics, Hunter also prepared "A Review and Restudy of the Schedule of Development" for the farm.[74]

---

[71] The Accokeek Foundation Inc., Annual Report 1959 "The First Two Years," 5.
[72] Richard H. Howland to Robert Ware Straus, March 3, 1958, MVLA Smith Overview 3.
[73] Invitation, n.d., LOC Finley Box 1; Charles C. Wall to Mrs. Chester C. Bolton, October 30, 1958, MVLA Frances Payne Bolton (FPB) File 5.
[74] "The Accokeek Foundation Annual Report: The First Two Years," 1959, MVLA Smith Overview 3. Wilbur Harvey Hunter, Jr., "The National Colonial Farm in Historical Perspective," LOC Finley Box 1. This ten-page history details the colonial farming in the Maryland and Virginia Tidewater and the early beginnings of tobacco farming, the cultivation processes, the cultivation of maize, agricultural techniques, livestock, and life on colonial farms. In 1958 Hunter

At their annual meeting in June 1959, the Accokeek Foundation's board debated whether the word "National" should be used in the name of the farm. Straus explained that they had included the word "National" in the name because they hoped other organizations would help the development of the project. After serious discussion, the board decided to use the name National Colonial Farm, at least temporarily. They also discussed a proposal for an advisory group for the farm to be called the board of regents for the National Colonial Farm. The function of the board would be to plan the program, propose a budget to the board of trustees, and implement the program that the trustees approved.[75]

In September 1959 Bolton reported that the efforts of the Accokeek Foundation in responding to the various threats to the viewshed had been largely successful. Now she and her fellow trustees were turning their attention to further development and use of the land that they had acquired. Over the past two years, she explained, the staff and experts had advanced the plans for the museum, now called National Colonial Farm, into an institution that combined a "genetical" research station with a historical re-creation of a working farm of the mid-18th century. The farm's pilot operations had been in operation nearly a year. She concluded that it was time for it to have its own board to guide its future development. She invited Cecil Wall, Mrs. F. F. Beirne and others to serve on a board of regents for National Colonial Farm of the Accokeek Foundation.[76]

Not long after, the Foundation completed the master site plan, including the location of road, trees, utilities, buildings, and fields, along with a waterfowl refuge at the southern boundary of the farm. The existing tenant house and outbuildings were demolished. At a MVLA Council meeting a month later, Bolton expressed her "great joy" at having the National Colonial Farm's board augmented with MVLA representatives Beirne and Wall. This, she told the members, "forges another link between the two banks of the Potomac which should be increasingly constructive for both."[77]

The Accokeek Foundation thus looked back to the early farming history of the region. While the early colonial life of New England was well known, Foundation leaders noted, "Relatively little is known about

---

presented the first of several reports. He also wrote a proposal for the farm defining in greater detail the crops, livestock, and agricultural techniques of the 18th Century. He would review that program in 1962. (See Straus, *The Possible Dream*, 104)

[75] "Minutes of Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Accokeek Foundation, June 22, 1959 (draft), LOC Finley Box 1.

[76] Frances P. Bolton to Charles Cecil Wall, September 18, 1959, MVLA Smith Overview 3; Bolton to Mrs. F. F. Beirne, September 18, 1959, ibid.; Robert Ware Straus to Cecil Wall, September 18, 1959, MVLA Smith Overview 3.

[77] "The Accokeek Foundation Annual Report: The First Two Years," 1959, 3; "Minutes of the Council," Mount Vernon Ladies Association, October 1959, 23.

the rural civilization that had its origin in this tidewater region." Yet it was on these Maryland and Virginia farms that selective breeding and biological experimentation had begun in the 18th century, and the ingenuity and industry of these tidewater and piedmont farmers produced many of the prototypes of modern farm implements and agricultural machinery. "In re-creating this 18th century environment," the Foundation noted, "the National Colonial Farm is developing a type of historical institution new to this area, a living, operating farm that is growing native crops and livestock by the old methods, and conducting useful research and experimentation dedicated to the future, as well as to the former farmers of America."[78]

National Colonial Farm, located directly opposite Mount Vernon, occupied roughly 30 acres of fertile land that the Foundation reported had been "tilled by Americans for almost three centuries." The land on which the farm was located was originally part of the oldest land grant in this part of Maryland, known as "Hansonton," which Randall Hanson had taken up in 1662. Hanson's grandnephew, John Hanson, was the first president of the Continental Congress. Bounded on the east by Bryan Point Road, the farm skirted the Potomac on the north and west and bordered a shallow lake which provided a wild waterfowl preserve at its southern border. There was a substantial wharf on the river and the main channel was close to the shore.

The farm would serve as a living example of a modest-sized tobacco farm of the mid-18th century. It was being set up as an operating farm, with the types of crops and livestock common in that period. The fields had been staked out and the first plantings of corn and tobacco were being made with primitive types of seed such as those used in early colonial times. The plan was not only to develop the farm as an authentic replica of a working farm but as a center for ongoing agricultural research on the colonial period. Historians and agricultural experts finalized plans for constructing or acquiring buildings to include the possibility of moving an authentic colonial building to the site.[79]

In addition to the historical mission, scientific and agricultural research remained a vital component of the National Colonial Farm program. One major objective was to determine and reproduce the exact types of crops and livestock that farmers used in colonial times, which required extensive research. Corn and tobacco were the most important of the crops, but in both cases, the source of the genes for these crops had for the most part been bred out of the modern varieties. Modern agricultural scientists had been

[78] Accokeek Foundation, "The National Colonial Farm – Progress Report," 1¸ LOC Finley Box 1.
[79] Ibid., 2.

studying the problems of identifying and reproducing the early types of corn. The plantings at the farm would continue as research under the supervision of the schools of Agriculture and Agronomy of the University of Maryland.

There had been no comparable study of early tobacco varieties. Scientists connected with the farm hoped to make advances in this area as well. The farm's ongoing genetic experimentation program had much support from the scientific community. The development of the farm for these scientific and educational purposes would be under the supervision of a board of regents for the farm composed of historians, agricultural scientists, architects and engineers, educators, and others. [80]

Conclusion

In their first years of existence, the Moyaone Association, the Alice Ferguson Foundation, and the Accokeek Foundation all accomplished a great deal. Within its first four years, the Moyaone Association had made significant strides in realizing its original objectives. It had greatly increased its net worth, established a reliable stream of revenue, and provided a mechanism for stabilizing an area of several thousand acres. It had demonstrated its community leadership in the Accokeek area with its prompt, organized response to the Hoffman City threat and helped prevent greater pollution of the Potomac. It had provided valuable support to the community through the Alice Ferguson Foundation.[81]

The Accokeek Foundation made significant accomplishments in a variety of areas. In 1959, Representative Bolton reported that during its short existence, the Accokeek Foundation had achieved "a remarkable period of accomplishment." The first task of the Foundation, she explained, had been to commission a series of research and planning studies to determine how best to preserve the open and wooded character of the waterfront. Rather than assembling a full-time staff, the Foundation had chosen to use the services of experts in various fields (e.g. history, genetics, museology, agronomy, architecture, geology, preservation, forestry, ornithology, and wildlife), under the leadership of the Galaxy Incorporated consulting firm. They had also enlisted qualified public and private agencies in their work. As a result, she observed, the Accokeek Foundation had made "substantial progress" in its first two years.[82]

During the 1950s the National Park Service had made contributions as well in recognizing the historic and archeological significance of the Maryland shore and in taking initial steps to preserve that area. It had

---

[80] Ibid., 3-4.
[81] "The Moyaone Company: A History of the First Four Years," 8.
[82] The Accokeek Foundation Inc., Annual Report 1959 "The First Two Years,"1.

also established and developed relationships with the various partners and stakeholder groups that would shape the history of the park for decades to come. By 1960, the new Accokeek Foundation, the Alice Ferguson Foundation, the Moyaone Association, and the National Park Service had begun to form a strong, enduring partnership and together laid a solid foundation for the structure that Congress would eventually use in creating Piscataway Park.

CHAPTER 3

THE STRUGGLE TO ESTABLISH PISCATAWAY PARK, 1960 – 1969

At the beginning of the 1960s, the battle for what would come to be called Piscataway Park was far from over. The Alice Ferguson Foundation, Accokeek Foundation, Mount Vernon Ladies' Association (MVLA) and other groups remained vigilant and actively engaged. Though President John F. Kennedy signed the legislation in October 1961 authorizing the establishment of the park, the subsequent struggle to secure the appropriations needed to acquire additional lands within the Mount Vernon viewshed (those not previously protected by the Accokeek Foundation) and to secure nearly 200 easements from local property owners would take seven more years.

Developing Threats and Stakeholder Response

In 1960 a major new threat to the Accokeek area surfaced when the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) proposed to construct a large sewage treatment plant along Piscataway Creek in clear view of Fort Washington and Mount Vernon. The WSSC identified a waterfront property on Mockley Point owned by farmer Henry Clagett as the likely location for the plant. Under the WSSC plan, the plant would require 110 acres and include several large structures and a smokestack, and the effluent from the plant would pour into the Potomac River directly across from Mount Vernon. The WSSC plan posed an even greater threat because as a state-created agency it had the power of eminent domain and was generally free of control by any other political unit in the state. The plans quickly sparked opposition from area residents and local organizations. In July 1960 Robert Straus confirmed with Wall that the WSSC was considering the construction of a sewage treatment plant at Mockley Point. The Accokeek Foundation, MVLA, and Moyaone Association quickly mobilized in response to the threat. They assembled a coalition of nature conservancies, historic preservationists, community associations, farmers, politicians, and others to lobby the Prince George's County Commissioners to officially intervene.[1]

The NPS had also become aware of the potential threat of the sewage treatment plant. In September 1960 the acting superintendent of National Capital Parks, Robert C. Horne, sent WSSC officials a map of the "Proposed Park Area." He asked them to cooperate in trying to locate the proposed sewage

[1] Wilbur Harvey Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park: A History of Legislation," (Accokeek Foundation, 1979), 18; Denise D. Meringolo, "The Accokeek Foundation and Piscataway Park," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 5, no. 1, Winter 2008, 9; Robert Ware Straus to Charles C. Wall, July 13, 1960, MVLA Operation Overview.

treatment plant so that that it would not preclude the possibility of the park development or interfere with the view from Mount Vernon. Horne recommended locating the plant at a different site along the south shore of Piscataway Creek.[2]

Later that month, Cecil Wall wrote to WSSC Chairman Blair Smith expressing the Moyaone Association's serious concerns about the WSSC's proposal to build a sewage treatment plant at Mockley Point. He asked Smith to have the WSSC give the location for the treatment plant further study. Meanwhile, a group of five Piscataway Bay civic associations signed a joint resolution opposing the current planned location for the plant. The issue came up a few weeks later at a MVLA meeting where its members expressed concern that the plant would encroach on the Moyaone Association holdings, as well as "be in full view of Fort Washington, and probably of Mount Vernon." Straus appealed to the members for their support in fighting what he called "this hideous intrusion."[3]

Meanwhile, the Accokeek Foundation hired a sanitary engineer from Johns Hopkins University, Dr. Gilbert Levin, to explore other options. Levin's August 1960 report recommended that the WSSC use the nearby Mattawoman Creek watershed for the collection sewers and locate its sewage plant a few miles downriver where Mattawoman Creek feeds into the Potomac River on the land of the Indian Head Naval Ordnance Station. However, the WSSC commissioners quickly rejected this alternative.[4]

Convinced of the grave threat posed by the proposed sewage treatment plant, the MVLA took the unprecedented step of providing the Accokeek Foundation with funds in support of their common goal, preserving the historic Mount Vernon viewshed. In addition, MVLA Regent Mrs. Francis Beirne sent a letter to each member of the National Trust in Maryland decrying this "first encroachment of the scenic environment of Mount Vernon." She assured the members that alternate sites were available.[5]

Until this time, the Accokeek Foundation had maintained a general policy of avoiding publicity and purchasing lands along the Potomac shore and Piscataway Creek quietly as they came on the market and at market price. This practice changed in August of 1960 when the local newspapers announced the

---

[2] Acting Superintendent Robert C. Horne to Robert J. McCleod, Chief Engineer, WSSC, September 14, 1960, MVLA Operation Overview.
[3] Charles C. Wall to Blair H. Smith, Chairman, WSSC, September 28, 1960, MLVA Operation Overview; "Piscataway Bay Civic Associations," October 14, 1960, MVLA Operation Overview; MVLA Minutes of the Council, 1960, 8, MVLA Minutes 1960.
[4] Robert Ware Straus, *The Possible Dream; George Washington's View* (Accokeek Foundation, 1988), 34.
[5] John Sprinkle, Jr., 5; MVLA Regent Mrs. Francis F. Beirne, "To the Maryland Members of the National Trust," December 27, 1960, MVLA Operation Overview.

WSSC proposal to build the sewage plant at Mockley Point. Accokeek Foundation members believed the proposal threatened to destroy all that they had accomplished in the previous five years. They also understood that private initiative alone could not battle this public organization that was largely autonomous with the power to condemn land and the ability to support itself with revenue bonds. In September 1960, Wall, Straus, and Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson of the Citizens Committee on Natural Resources met to discuss how best to respond to the threat. They agreed that they should turn to the federal government to request legislation creating a national park.[6]

On January 13, 1961, hundreds of people representing the MVLA, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Wildlife Federation, and various other groups crowded into a Prince George's County Commissioners' public hearing in Upper Marlboro in Maryland to express their opposition to the proposed sewage plant. Each group presented its own reasons for opposing the plant, but perhaps the most powerful argument came from the Mount Vernon representatives, specifically from Cecil Wall, who pointed out in very simple terms that George Washington would not have favored a treatment plant obstructing the view from his Mount Vernon home.[7]

At the same hearing, NPS Director Conrad Wirth testified against the proposed sewage plant referring back to the National Park Service's 1955 endorsement of the plan to preserve the Maryland shoreline in this area "'as part of the historic vista and scenic environs of Mount Vernon and Fort Washington.'" The executive director of the National Trust, Robert Garvey, also spoke out in opposition to the plant. On the other side of the controversy were prospective real estate developers who needed improved sewage facilities so that they could build more houses as well as engineers who maintained that this was the best and cheapest location for the plant. In addition, there were supporters of the proposed plant who hoped to profit from selling their property to the WSSC.[8]

The WSSC proposal threatened the basic concept of the Accokeek Foundation's program and prompted its members to reexamine their established goals. At a special meeting in January 1961 the trustees reaffirmed the Foundation's original goals.[9]

---

[6] MVLA, "Report of the Special Land Committee," October 1961, MVLA VR Labouisse Operation Overview.
[7] Meringolo, 9; Straus, 35; MVLA, "Report of the Special Land Committee," October 1961, MVLA VR Labouisse Operation Overview.
[8] Hunter, 18-19.
[9] The Accokeek Foundation: 1961 Special Report for the Annual Trustees Meeting, June 1961, College of Southern Maryland (CSM) Accokeek Box 4.

Soon after that January 13 public meeting, Representative Bolton wrote to WSSC Chairman Smith on behalf of the Accokeek Foundation. After viewing a map that the WSSC had displayed at the recent public hearing, she told him, the Foundation had concluded that the location of a major sewage plant on the Foundation's lands "would seriously injure the long range program which has been undertaken in the national interest." She asked Smith to reconsider the plan. Faced with the stiff resistance, the WSSC ultimately decided to refrain from further consideration of the Mockley Point site for a treatment plant, but it left open other options.[10]

The WSSC threat and their shared concerns about development along the Maryland shore served to strengthen the bond between the MVLA and the Accokeek Foundation and prompted the two groups to join forces publicly in the fight to preserve that Maryland shoreline. Straus approached the MVLA with a request that the two organizations quietly join in paying the salary of "a qualified man" to assist in and direct a further attempt to protect the area from commercial development. This individual would keep informed of developments and conduct a holding operation for the eventual transfer of the land to the NPS. Straus asked the MVLA to donate $10,000 for this purpose. In addition, the Moyaone Association was raising $5,000 and hoped to obtain another $10,000 from a potential donor.[11]

MVLA gave the Accokeek Foundation a $10,000 check as a grant to pay for research and studies on the best methods for protecting and preserving the scenic Maryland shore opposite Mount Vernon. The members asked only that the MVLA name not be used in order to avoid the publicity. MVLA Regent Mrs. Francis F. Beirne explained, "We are deeply appreciative of the work you have put into our common goal and wish you all success," and noted that the MVLA would assist in any way possible.[12] The Accokeek Foundation also received a $1,000 grant from the Alice Ferguson Foundation for the preservation effort.[13]

In February 1961 Straus provided Wall with a progress report on the work that the Accokeek Foundation was doing under the grant. The printed report titled "Progress Prospectus: The Accokeek Foundation, 1960 – 1961" laid out the Foundation's accomplishments in its first few years. The Foundation reported that it had initiated no new projects in the previous year but had used much of the earlier research in developing the land and more clearly defining the existing programs. "The major problem now," it noted,

---

[10] Frances P. Bolton to Blair H. Smith, January 19, 1961; Hunter, 24.
[11] Wall to Wirth, 24 February 1961; MVLA Minutes of the Council, 1960, 40, MVLA Minutes 1960.
[12] Mrs. Francis F. Beirne, Regent, MVLA, to Robert Ware Straus, Nov 4, 1960, MVLA Smith Overview 3.
[13] Minutes of Special Meeting of Board of Trustees on January 19, 1961 (draft), January 23, 1961, Library of Congress (LOC), Manuscript Division, David E. Finley Papers, Box 1. Hereafter cited as LOC Finley Box 1.

"is the wise selection of those areas likely, in the long run, to be most productive." The report then provided an update on the Accokeek Foundation's major programs: the National Colonial Farm, wildlife development areas, use of the Girl Scout Camp, an arboretum and zoo, and new programs in science education.[14]

Park Authorization and Development

The threat of building a sewage treatment plant at Mockley Point gave new urgency to the ongoing efforts to establish a national park along the Potomac River. In December 1960, Straus sent NPS Chief Historian Herbert Kahler a letter requesting the views of the NPS on the historical significance of Mockley Point. A few weeks later Director Wirth responded that under provisions of the Historic Sites Act of August 21, 1935, the NPS was conducting a National Survey of Archeological and Historic Sites to determine which sites were of exceptional value in commemorating and illustrating U.S. history. The sites that the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments classified as of "exceptional value" were considered eligible for Registered National Historic Landmark status. Wirth assured Straus that the NPS would include Mockley Point in this survey program and consider it for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) status if and when the NPS undertook work on a theme that the site represented. "From our preliminary knowledge of the site," he concluded, "we hope that it will not be despoiled by modern development."[15]

In January 1961, Director Wirth told Wall how pleased he was with what Representative Bolton, the Accokeek Foundation, and the Moyaone Association had accomplished in terms of land acquisition since 1956. Wirth was encouraged that a considerable amount of these land holdings was within the proposed park boundaries, a proposal that the NPS had been considering back in 1955 and 1956. "It is possible that the ultimate preservation of this section of the Maryland shoreline may be realized only through some type of public ownership," he wrote. Wirth went on to explain that there were various levels of public control such as federal, state, and county. He reminded Wall that the prospects of the federal government securing the necessary legislative authority and appropriations to place this shoreline under

[14] Robert Ware Straus to Charles Cecil Wall, MVLA, February 1, 1961, MVLA Smith Overview 3; Accokeek Foundation, "Progress Prospectus: The Accokeek Foundation, 1960 – 1961," MVLA Smith Overview 3.
[15] Straus to Herbert E. Kahler, December 22, 1960, CSM Accokeek Box 4; Conrad L. Wirth to Robert Ware Straus, January 16, 1961, CSM Accokeek Box 4.

federal ownership were poor and conceded that adding new areas to the national parks system was difficult.[16]

Wirth explained that a number of public agencies, to include the NPS, had the ability to preserve and protect land from non-conforming uses, and most of these agencies could accept donations of land. He suggested that a team effort by the Moyaone Association, Accokeek Foundation, MVLA, and other interested parties might be the most expeditious way to acquire the additional lands deemed necessary to reach the ultimate objective. Once the property was acquired, he wrote, the NPS "would be very happy to work with state and local agencies to consider the proper park organization to administer the Mockley Point area."[17]

The director also recommended to Wall that they give some consideration to the new *open space law* that Maryland had passed in March 1960. This open space law provided a way for any county, city, or the Maryland State Department of Forest and Parks to acquire by purchase, gift, grant, or lease, the title or any lesser interests in real property in order to preserve, through limitations on future use, open spaces and areas of public use and enjoyment. Finally, Wirth referenced the WSSC threat, which he argued represented "a very serious problem of adverse use and is incompatible with the historic and scenic values of this area." He assured Wall that the National Park Service was prepared to cooperate with the MVLA, Accokeek Foundation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and others in opposing this encroachment. [18]

At a February 1961 meeting, the Accokeek Foundation directors decided that they should do more to publicize the WSSC threat, and Wall wrote an article expressing the Mount Vernon point of view which he planned to publish, first sharing a copy with Director Wirth. Wirth responded with a letter praising Wall for his role at the mid-January public hearing. He called the meeting a "success" though he acknowledged the need for more preservation work. Related to this, Wirth said the NPS was currently reviewing the proposed legislation that Straus had sent and would provide him with comments. "We are very pleased that proposed legislation is underway and appreciate the opportunity to review it." The NPS, he wrote,

[16] Conrad Wirth to Charles C. Wall, January 4, 1961, MVLA Overview Box 2.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

believed that public ownership of the shoreline and possibly the hillside was the best way to protect the area, though "some type of cooperative venture" with other interests might be worked out.[19]

Moyaone residents were committed to preserving the rural character of their community, but they also shared the concerns that local farmers had about inviting the federal government to assert any control over their use of the land. Both groups reluctantly agreed that they needed government intervention to prevent the WSSC from condemning Mockley Point. But the alliance between the Moyaone residents and the farmers remained a fragile one. As plans for the park advanced, the conservationist view that typically shaped NPS properties contradicted the views held by most local farmers. In addition, the close alliance of the Moyaone residents with the Accokeek Foundation and the MVLA fed the concerns of the farmers that their land values were being threatened by outsiders who stood to gain personally from the creation of the park.[20]

In March 1961, a number of the individuals who were concerned about the WSSC threat met for lunch at the historic Cosmos Club in downtown Washington to once again discuss the situation and possible federal legislation, including Secretary of the Citizens Committee on Natural Resources Dr. Spencer Smith, Wagner, Straus, Wall, and Wirth. As a result of that lunch meeting, Wirth agreed to prepare legislation providing for the creation of a national park on the lands across from Mount Vernon for all parties to review. Over the next few months various drafts of the proposed legislation circulated through the community and sparked lively discussion. The proposed legislation was endorsed by the Wilderness Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the Wildlife Management Institute, the National Parks Association, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Supporters sent letters to their congressmen, the governors of Maryland and Virginia, to President Kennedy, and to First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy. At one point, Mrs. Kennedy thanked Representative Bolton for the information that she had provided about the sewage plant proposal and the threat to Mount Vernon. "Naturally you have the President's and my support on this," she explained. Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower had also written a letter expressing his support, and a number of other elected officials voiced their support for the proposed legislation.[21]

---

[19] Charles C. Wall to Conrad L. Wirth, February 14, 1961, MLVA Overview Box 2; Conrad L. Wirth to Charles C. Wall, March 15, 1961, MVLA Overview Box 2.
[20] Meringolo, 9.
[21] Report of the Special Land Committee, October 1961, 2, MVLA VR Labouisse Operation Overview; Hunter, 19-20.

In May 1961 the MVLA regents held a reception at Mount Vernon as part of their effort to enlist support. They invited House and Senate members from both parties and key committee members, but the response was "disappointing." Aside from Representative Bolton, only one member of Congress accepted the invitation. However, Virginia Governor Lindsay Almond, Jr., did attend the reception. Gov. Almond's remarks indicating that he would recommend to the Virginia legislature that it join with Maryland and the federal government in buying the land across the river drew national attention.[22]

During the battle over the sewage treatment plant, Representative Bolton found some strong support in Congress, especially from U.S. Representative John P. Saylor (R-PA), ranking minority member of the House Committee on Lands and Parks, U.S. Senator Clinton P. Anderson (D-NM), Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Interior, and U.S. Senator Wayne N. Aspinall (D-CO). On June 6, 1961, Senator Anderson introduced Senate Joint Resolution 97 (S. J. Res. 97) authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to acquire certain lands for a national park on the Maryland shore. Soon after, Representative Saylor introduced an identical resolution in the House, H. J. Res. 459. The purpose of these bills was the same and would later be reflected in P.L. 87-362.[23]

These two resolutions each included a long preamble highlighting the features worthy of preservation, such as the important "'site of a pre-Columbian and colonial period village,'" as well as National Colonial Farm. They also indicated that protecting these lands from erosion and siltation required the preservation of the forest cover. Although the committee reports mentioned this matter, it was deleted from the final bill. The House and Senate committees on Interior reports (*House Report No. 1045, August 28, 1961,* and *Senate Report 1082, September 18, 1961*) both stressed the urgency of the sewage treatment plant threat. On August 17, 1961, the House Subcommittee on National Parks held a public hearing, and the Senate subcommittee held its own hearing on September 14. Representatives from the Moyaone Association, the Accokeek Foundation, the Alice Ferguson Foundation, the Piscataway Company, and a few civic organizations provided testimony.[24]

Other unofficial/uninvited stakeholders such as Phillip Proctor began to stress personal longstanding cultural heritage ownership with the Native American Moyaone Archaeological site after Alice Ferguson's death. Phillip Sheridan Proctor in Charles County Maryland in 1895, had lived the varied life of a miner and was a well-known Piscataway healer and root and herb doctor. He was an influential figure in the

---

[22] Report of the Special Land Committee, October 1961, 2.
[23] Meringolo, 9; Hunter 20-21; Straus, 38; See Hunter for the language in these resolutions – and in P.L. 87-362.
[24] Hunter, 21-22.

cultural revival of several American Indian groups in the Middle Atlantic region and traveled through the East Coast raising the visibility of the Piscataway people. He worked with ethnographers and archeologists as they searched for evidence of American Indian survival in an area where they were thought to have vanished. In the 1930s, he had spent time digging the Moyaone village site with the Fergusons. Proctor eventually revived the usage of Tayac, the hereditary title passed to the Piscataway tribal leaders, as his surname and began to refer to himself as Turkey Tayac as a tactic to save the land and fight for tribal recognition rights. Though Tayac was not included in much of the primary stakeholders' communications and lobbying that supported the bill protecting the Moyaone Village site from the construction of the sewage treatment plant, he would actively work alongside the fledgling American Indian Movement later in the decade to make himself seen and his voice heard in the protection of the land. Tayac's dogged character concerning the rights of the Piscataway within the park would continue to challenge the decision-making of other predominately white stakeholders throughout his adult life, ultimately culminating in the struggle for his burial rights after his death in 1979.

The Department of the Interior recommended enacting the park bill but requested an amendment to the bill in response to opposition from the owners and lessees of the Marshall Hall Amusement Park. These individuals objected to including the amusement park in the area proposed for acquisition by the bill. The lessee of Marshall Hall, Joseph Goldstein, lobbied strenuously on this issue. In a meeting with Wall and Straus, he argued that continued operation of the amusement park was compatible with the intent of the bill and that it was a valuable business property. He later indicated that although he opposed the federal government taking his land in fee, he would be willing to offer what he called visual easements for his property. Interior officials were sympathetic to Goldstein's position and recommended to Interior Committee Chairman Senator Aspinall that his committee eliminate Marshall Hall from the bill. Straus vigorously objected, He told Interior Department officials that Marshall Hall was part of the basic plan and that at the very least they should act upon Goldstein's willingness to accept easements. The department then sent a letter to the committee on August 21 recommending that the Marshall Hall property be removed from the fee taking area in the bill and placed in the scenic easement area. Though legislators removed the Marshall Hall reference from the bill, the Marshall Hall issue would continue to pose problems in the future.[25]

[25] Hunter, 22-23; Straus, 39.

Meanwhile the sewage treatment plant controversy reached a climax in late September 1961 as the WSSC considered an alternate site for the sewage treatment plant. Senator Anderson informed the WSSC that Congress was considering legislation to create a park in the Piscataway Creek area and asked them to wait until Congress had more time to consider the project during recess. The WSSC chairman responded that they would not wait on the Senate to act and would begin acquiring the necessary land and start construction. Typically a bill to create a new park unit could take years for enactment, but now faced with this imminent threat of the sewage treatment plant and angered by the WSSC's curt response, Senator Anderson and Representative Saylor called for immediate action. Reporting the bill out to the floor, Senator Anderson referenced the threat. The bill providing for the preservation of certain lands on Piscataway Creek in Prince George's and Charles counties, Maryland, known as Mockley Point, passed in both houses of Congress without a dissenting vote and President Kennedy signed the bill into law on October 4, 1961 as P. L. 87-362.[26]

P.L. 87-362 authorized Congress to appropriate up to $937,000 to carry out its provisions.[27] It authorized the Interior Department to acquire the land in Maryland for park purposes – approximately 2,600 acres for scenic easements and 1,186 acres by outright acquisition. The NPS reported to the Secretary of the Interior, "Thus, the use of this scenic and historic area by commercial developments or, as suggested, a site for a sewer plant, would be averted."[28]

Though Congress had now authorized the park and the president had signed the park bill into law, the battle was far from over. Park supporters faced a seven-year-long contentious struggle to secure the park appropriations that the Interior Department needed to acquire additional lands within the viewshed (those not previously protected by the Accokeek Foundation) as well as nearly 200 easements from local property owners. In November 1961 Interior officials sent a letter to the Accokeek Foundation stating that they wanted to begin implementing the law and asking for advice about how to convey the Foundation's land. Straus then met with Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall and his staff to present the Accokeek Foundation's plans, and Udall directed his staff to work out the details.[29]

---

[26] Hunter, 23; Straus, 39; *Congressional Record*, April 18, 1962, "Preserving Our Heritage," CSM Accokeek Box 10.
[27] P.L. 87-362, 87th Congress, October 4, 1961, "To provide for the preservation and protection of land in Prince George's and Charles counties Maryland and for other purposes."
[28] NPS, *National Park Service Annual Report to the Secretary of the Interior, 1962*, 113.
[29] Sprinkle, 7; The Accokeek Foundation, "Report of the General Manager for November 1961," CSM Accokeek Box 4.

WSSC officials continued to lobby on Capitol Hill, suggesting that they would simply put their sewage plant at another site nearby. In late November 1961, Dr. Gabrielson, Dr. Spencer Smith of the Citizens Committee on Natural Resources, and Straus met with Secretary Udall and a large NPS delegation. The secretary assured them of his active interest and support in getting the park appropriation through the coming session of Congress. Wall later reported that this high-level approach took the NPS representatives by surprise since they had assumed that the Foundation would convey its lands immediately and then "drop out of the picture." However, Straus and others believed they had a stronger chance of getting the appropriation quickly if the land transfer was contingent on the appropriation. Wall suggested that they stipulate this in a firm contract.[30]

On February 6, 1962, Wall, Straus, and Dr. Smith submitted a statement in support of an appropriation for the new park to the House Appropriations Subcommittee for the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies, but Wall found the attitude of the subcommittee's chairman, Representative Michael J. (Mike) Kirwan (D-OH), to be "unfriendly." Wall conceded that the appropriation bill would probably go to the House floor without the park appropriation item. He mailed out letters to the MVLA vice regents explaining the situation and asking them to enlist the support of their representatives in the House and that of local conservation groups. The MVLA vice regents in turn launched an aggressive letter writing campaign.[31]

Meanwhile, in a personal appeal to President Kennedy, Wall recalled that the legislation Kennedy had signed, P.L. 87-362, included an associated budget request for $937,000. He explained to President Kennedy that when it came to securing that funding, "We were over-sanguine." Wall recalled his February 6 appearance before Representative Kirwan's Interior appropriations subcommittee and the full House Appropriations Committee, along with Straus. Wall and Straus concluded that the appropriation for the park was in difficulty. Wall reported that Kirwan supported the position of the real estate developers. He believed the subcommittee did not intend to report this item to the full appropriations committee, and this would create a critical situation with developers poised to move in. Speaking for the MVLA, Wall asked President Kennedy to intervene. When the first lady learned of the roadblock in the

[30] Charles C. Wall to Mrs. Douglas M. Gibson, December 19, 1961, MVLA Operation Overview 61.
[31] Wall to Mrs. Henry Porter Isham, February 7, 1962, MVLA VR Isham Operation Overview; Wall to Dear ___, February 7,1962, MVLA Smith Overview 3; Wall to Mrs. Henry Porter Isham, February 14, 1962, MVLA VR Isham Operation Overview.

Appropriations subcommittee, she called on the White House legislative section to "do everything they can."[32]

Some property owners along the Potomac objected to the federal government purchasing their land as the legislation proposed. William E. Owen, an attorney representing some of these property owners, indicated that he opposed the NPS request for $937,000 to buy land for a park across the river from Mount Vernon where WSSC proposed to build a sewage treatment plant. He argued that some of the land to be included within the park could not even be seen from Mount Vernon.[33]

Just as some groups and individuals had expressed opposition to creating the park, they now opposed appropriating funds for it. The opposition included a group of Accokeek farmers who argued that 90 percent of their property could not even be seen from Mount Vernon. They pointed out what they perceived to be inconsistencies in MVLA's approach.[34] Some Moyaone Association members also expressed opposition to P.L. 87-362. They argued that the association's leaders had not conveyed their intentions when the members initially passed the resolution in support of the park and had rather quietly drawn up the boundaries of the bill, including in it almost all the land in the Moyaone Reserve plus some historic farms.

Some landowners claimed that only after Congress passed P.L. 87-362 did they become fully aware of the law's real impact on their properties. Although Straus presented himself as representing the entire community, they insisted, he did not. Speaking for a committee representing the opposition, Roger Few wrote that two-thirds of the landowners opposed the bill. He asked the MVLA Board of Regents to meet with them so they could find a solution that would satisfy both sides. In the spring of 1963, five families hired a lawyer to prevent the NPS from acquiring their land. The lawsuit portrayed the Moyaone Association members as profit motivated real estate developers hiding behind the façade of conservation.[35]

The opposition from some landowners did not go without notice in Congress, and it temporarily slowed the progress of land acquisition for the park. Yet, the coalition of preservation entities and supporters in

---

[32] Charles C. Wall, MVLA Resident Director, to The President, February 19, 1962, MVLA Smith Overview 3; Jackie to Uncle Lefty (Wilmarth Sheldon Lewis), February 16, 1962, MVLA Smith Overview 3.
[33] "Potomac Owners Oppose Plans to Protect View from Mt. Vernon, *Washington Post*, March 10, 1962, MVLA VR Burdick Overview File.
[34] John F. Underwood et. al. to Mrs. C. Lalor Burdick, VR MVLA, February 21, 1962, MVLA VR Burdick Overview File.
[35] Roger Few, Chairman, to Mrs. Henry Porter Isham, February 27, 1962, MVLA VR Isham Operation Overview; Meringolo, 10; "Farmers Ask Congress to Block US Purchase of Their Land," *The Washington Post*, March 21, 1963.

Congress ultimately proved too powerful. The MVLA continued to stress the historic importance of the view and was able to generate letters of support from around the country. [36]

In early March 1962, MVLA Regent Rosamond Beirne sent a telegram to the vice regents informing them that the opponents of P.L. 87-362 were trying to confuse the issue and defeat the appropriation measure. She reiterated that under the law no landowner would lose his home and that Moyaone members were asked only to confirm to the government what was already in the covenants for their land. Farmers could lease back the land for agricultural purposes, she added, and the Interior Department had eliminated the language including Marshall Hall in the park.[37]

The Interior appropriations bill went before the House of Representatives on March 20, 1962. The House Appropriations Committee reported in March 1962 against appropriating the $937,000 that Congress had authorized in P.L. 87-362. The House Appropriations Committee argued that the new plans for the sewage plant would not detract from the view from Mount Vernon and that the area already had adequate planning and zoning controls. Bolton responded forcefully in a speech on the House floor on April 18, 1962. She argued that the House Appropriations Committee had based its action on inadequate knowledge of the situation. Moreover, the testimony given before the committee had been inaccurate. She found it "truly shocking" that anyone would aggressively refuse to protect the area for future generations and challenged Congress to act with "vision and courage."[38]

On May 10, 1962, the Senate Appropriations Committee restored the $937,000 that the House had cut out of the bill, and as required, the issue went to a House-Senate conference committee for resolution. The legislators ultimately agreed to appropriate $213,000 in the final Interior appropriation bill to purchase the land at Mockley Point. [39]

Meanwhile, the dispute over a proposed sewage treatment plant continued. Though the proposed plant on Mockley point had been rejected there remained concern about the WSSC's ability to build the plant at another site nearby. The House-Senate conference committee had agreed to a limited appropriation (the $213,000) for the purchase of the land at Mockley Point only, not for any of the surrounding land.

---

[36] Meringolo, 10-11.
[37] Telegram, Rosamond R. Beirne, Regent MVLA to Every VR, March 6, 1962, CSM Accokeek Box 18.
[38] Hunter, 26; Speech of Hon. Frances P. Bolton, "Preserving our Heritage," April 18, 1962, *Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 87th Congress, Second Session,* CSM Accokeek Box 10.
[39] S. Rept. 1490, 87th Cong 2d sess., "Interior Department and Related Agencies Bill, 1963," May 10, 1962, MVLA Overview Box 2; "Senate Unit Restores Funds for Mockley Point Project, *The Washington Post*, May 11, 1962.

For some the question remained whether the limited appropriation was the first step in implementing the whole national park or whether it meant, as the WSSC chairman contended, that plans for the rest of the park had been abandoned.[40] *The Washington Post* reported that because of Congress's limited appropriation, the WSSC had concluded that it was free to build its plant in the immediate area. The *Washington Post* concluded, "Once again Congress is confronted with the urgent need for an enforceable policy to control construction along the Potomac River." [41]

When they learned that the WSSC was considering another location nearby, a property known as the Smith Farm just east of Mockley Point, as a potential site for the plant, Gabrielson, Straus, and Wall quickly set up a meeting with Secretary Udall. They proposed that the Accokeek Foundation would immediately turn over the so-called "Auburn" lands that it owned on Piscataway Bay to the government if the Interior Department notified WSSC that it would refuse permission to cross this land with sewer pipes and move to block WSSC from obtaining the Smith property. The Secretary directed his staff to do this, and on August 7, 1962, the Accokeek Foundation deeded the roughly 150-acre Auburn woodlands to the department to save the land from the threat of the sewage plant, the first of several intended donations. Accokeek Foundation President Representative Bolton formally presented the deed to this land to Secretary Udall on August 27, 1962, effectively blocking the construction of a sewage plant at that location. Udall hailed the acquisition as a major step in the "constant struggle" to preserve the Potomac shoreline. He strongly disagreed with WSSC Chairman Smith's characterization of the limited $213,000 appropriation as implicit federal approval to build the sewage plant nearby. Secretary Udall indicated that he would continue to seek the balance of the $937,000 appropriation needed to complete the park project in the Interior Department's budget for coming year.[42]

In January 1963 the Kennedy administration asked Congress to appropriate the balance of the money it had authorized for the park back in 1961, $724,000. In late February 1963 Representative Bolton appeared before the House subcommittee on Interior appropriations in her role as the MVLA Vice Regent for Ohio in support of an appropriation to complete the purchase of the land. In 1961, she explained, Congress had passed the legislation to preserve and protect the area from development (P.L. 87-362), but

---

[40] "Senate Votes Mockley Pt. Purchase," *The Washington Post*, August 2, 1962, MVLA VR Burdick Overview file.
[41] "Gen. Washington's View," *The Washington Post*, August 8, 1962, MVLA VR Burdick Overview file.
[42] "Udall Accepts Gift of 155 Acres," *The Washington Post*, August 28, 1962, MVLA VR Burdick Overview file; Straus, 56; Frances P. Bolton, The Accokeek Foundation Report of the President, June 6, 1963, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, David E. Finley papers, Box 1. Hereafter cited as LOC Finley; Gene Hersh, "The Bolton Battle for Mount Vernon," *The Plain Dealer Sunday Magazine*, March 14, 1965, Operation Overview Black Binder III.

to implement the act it needed to appropriate $937,000 to match the more than $1 million in land values that the private foundations had agreed to donate. She recalled that in the closing minutes of the 87th Congress members had passed a compromise appropriation of $213,000, leaving that balance of $724,000. The Interior Department had included this amount ($724,000) in the current year's budget. In early March, Bolton followed up with a newsletter telling readers that it would be "tragic" if Congress failed to appropriate these funds. "It has been amply demonstrated that private owners cannot hold back the real estate developers who are standing by with their bulldozers," she warned.[43]

In March 1963, the House subcommittee on Interior appropriations passed the Interior appropriations bill without providing the funds needed to purchase the balance of land for Piscataway Park. A month later, the Senate passed the Interior appropriations bill and provided the balance of the funds, the $724,000 authorized and needed to continue acquiring the land and help preserve the Maryland viewshed. Once again the bill went to the joint committee for resolution but in July 1963 the joint committee failed to reach agreement. Thus, Congress failed to appropriate the additional funds to carry out the program already underway with Accokeek Foundation donations.[44]

By the summer of 1963, part of the land for the park had already been donated, and scenic easements on 1,500 acres were to be donated or purchased when the additional funds became available. However, Representative Kirwan had taken the position that the land acquisition was not a federal responsibility and argued that if Prince George's County wanted a park, it should purchase the land itself. In mid-July 1963 *The Washington Post* published a strongly critical piece condemning Congress's refusal to appropriate the additional funds for the park, calling it a "heads-in-the-sand" policy. Throughout the summer the staff at Mount Vernon continued to work vigorously to generate support among their daily visitors by providing them with information about the threat across the river.[45]

Senator Carl Hayden (D-AZ), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, was a key supporter in the battle to preserve the Mount Vernon viewshed. Representative Bolton recalled that while the House Appropriations Committee had refused to appropriate the necessary funding, Hayden's Senate

---

[43] Frances P. Bolton, "Reporting from Washington," March 2, 1963, MVLA Overview Box 2.
[44] Hersh, "The Bolton Battle for Mount Vernon"; Straus, 56-57 Press Release from the Office of Senator Clifford P. Case (R-NJ), May 22, 1963, Operation Overview Black Binder II.
[45] "Mount Vernon Scenic Funds Cut From Bill," *The Washington Post*, July 13, 1963, MVLA VR Labouisse Operation Overview; "Humiliating Congress," *The Washington Post*, July 15, 1963, MVLA VR Labouisse Operation Overview; "Mount Vernon Asks Tourists' Help," *The (Washington) Evening Star*, July 23, 1963 MVLA VR Labouisse Operation Overview.

committee had always approved it. In 1962 when the House had refused to appropriate any money, she explained, the Senate approved the entire $937,000, and the matter went into conference committee. Bolton believed that it was only Senator Hayden's firmness in August 1962 that brought the $213,000 appropriation. Though as noted in 1963 the Senate backed down in conference committee and no funds were appropriated, Bolton continued to regard Hayden as a valuable advocate.[46]

With time for action running out, in 1963 Bolton and other supporters gathered to plan a strategy for the next year. After looking at various options, they agreed that the best course was to push for including the remaining $724,000 in the regular Interior Appropriations Bill, which would come before the House subcommittee on Interior appropriations in the spring.[47]

Representative Kirwan was quick to point out that his committee had already appropriated $213,000 to buy the Mockley Point site, the area originally threatened with the construction of the sewage treatment plant, but after careful review his committee had determined that acquisition of land other than Mockley Point site at excessive costs "was not necessary or warranted." The two foundations had indicated their plans to donate 360 acres opposite Mount Vernon, and 151 acres had already been donated. Scenic easements on an additional 2,600 acres were to be donated as well. Also because of the increase in real estate values, Congress would have to appropriate considerably more money than the $937,000 authorized in the original 1961 legislation. Kirwan also argued that the area was currently under adequate local planning and zoning controls and there was no evidence that any action was planned that would detract from the viewscape.[48]

Meanwhile, approximately 70 landowners, mostly Moyaone Association members who had long supported the project, had donated scenic easements to the park. Many had previously agreed to donate easements as soon as the 1961 legislation was implemented. Though there were funds available to purchase Mockley Point, nothing more could be done until Congress appropriated all of the funds needed to fully implement P.L. 87-362.[49]

---

[46] Frances P. Bolton to Mrs. Arthur N. Pack, VR MVLA, November 14, 1963, MVLA Overview Box 2.
[47] Frances P. Bolton to Charles Cecil Wall, December 27, 1963, MVLA Overview Box 2.
[48] Michael J. Kirwan, Chairman, Subcommittee, Department of the interior and Related Agencies, to Eugene R. Hurley, January 27, 1964, MVLA Operation Overview 45.
[49] Hunter, 29-30.

Potomac River Conservation

As the struggle for appropriations continued, in January 1965, President Kennedy's successor, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, responded to a letter from Bolton concerning the important efforts underway to preserve the view from Mount Vernon. Referencing Congress's failure in August 1964 to approve the balance of the funds authorized in 1961, the president wrote "We hope that a solution will be found to problems that have arisen in Congress because of the cost of acquiring all of the necessary lands." He assured her that this project had his "sympathetic consideration."[50]

The movement for the park thus received some support from President Johnson and gathered new energy with his "Special Message to Congress on Conservation and the Restoration of Natural Beauty" on February 8, 1965, which introduced a major conservation program for the country. In this message he laid out his plan to make the Potomac River "a model of scenic and recreational values." He called for the Secretary of the Interior to prepare and implement the model program that would clean up the river and keep it clean; protect its natural beauties "by the acquisition of scenic easements, zoning or other measures;" provide adequate recreational facilities; and complete the currently authorized George Washington Memorial Parkway on both banks. Soon after Secretary Udall called on all "the chosen stewards and public trustees of the Potomac Valley" to work and plan together in support of the president's program. In the interim, Udall recommend that they suspend action on any proposals that might adversely affect the shared goal of making the Potomac River a "'conservation model'" for the country.[51]

Secretary Udall, who now had responsibility for the Potomac River conservation program, indicated to Representative Bolton that he was optimistic about getting the money needed to complete the park from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In 1964 Congress had established the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a federal program to safeguard natural areas, water resources, and cultural heritage and to improve outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the nation. Udall's optimism aside, in recent years the price of land in the Accokeek area had spiked and Bolton was cautious. In an update on MVLA's Operation Overview she told David Finley and her colleagues in the House that Representative

[50] Lyndon B. Johnson to Mrs. Bolton, January 21, 1965, MVLA VR Burdick Overview File.
[51] For full text, see Lyndon B. Johnson, "Special Message to Congress on Conservation and Restoration of Natural Beauty," February 8, 1965, www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=27285; Office of the Secretary of the Interior, Press Release, February 11, 1965, ?; Udall Brothers, *Journal of Arizona History* V. 41, no. 4, Winter 2000.

Saylor would sponsor legislation to increase the authorization amount for the park and that they should temporarily "hold our fire" to see if their "friends" could push the program forward. [52]

Bolton told Finley that she was gratified that both the president and the secretary had borrowed heavily from the "governmental-public-private cooperation and the scenic easement pattern which we pioneered in preserving the view from Mount Vernon." She recognized, however, that the battle was "far from finished."[53] Over the next couple years, Bolton would continue to press Congress to reprogram $1 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for land acquisition at Piscataway, but without success.[54]

As one newspaper explained, President Johnson and his task force on natural beauty recognized that "landscape improvement" had been a neglected area. The task force's report had outlined programs that reflected and responded to the public's desire for a better environment, "especially in and around sprawling cities and suburbs." The first White House Conference on Natural Beauty would be held May 23 – May 25, 1965, in Washington. In recognition of her important role, one of the conference's key organizers, philanthropist Laurance Rockefeller, invited Bolton to attend.[55]

One news account expressed hopes that the reports of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (1963), the Virginia Potomac Committee (1965), and the Potomac Interim Report to the President (1966) by Secretary Udall's task force would stimulate interest in the water resources of the Potomac River basin and finally inspire action. But it also conceded that it would take many years to implement President Johnson's instruction to "'make the Potomac a swimmable river'" and restore its scenic beauty and cleanliness. Meanwhile, Johnson ordered the Interior Department to conduct studies related to plans for the Potomac River basin. He wanted to make the Potomac an example of what could be done to clean the nation's polluted rivers.

President Johnson directed Secretary Udall to develop plans not only to stop pollution but also to develop scenic beauty, parks, and parkways. Udall in turn set up the Federal Interdepartmental Task Force on the Potomac with representatives from various federal agencies that had responsibility for various aspects of river development. The task force's interim report recommended the construction of several dams and

---

[52] Frances P. Bolton to Dr. David Finley, February 8, 1965, LOC Finley Box 1. (Same letter sent to House Colleagues)
[53] Bolton to Finley, February 17, 1965, LOC Finley Papers Box 1.
[54] Representative George H. Manon to Hon. Frances P. Bolton, January 7, 1967, MVLA Overview Box 2.
[55] "B…Is No Longer a Dirty Word," *Landscape Architecture*, April 1965, 175, Operation Overview Black Binder III; Bolton to Finley, February 17, 1965, LOC Finley Papers Box 1.

secondary sewage treatment in all river basins and the protection of the banks of the Potomac against encroachment. It also recommended extending the George Washington Memorial Parkway from Mount Vernon to Mason Neck and Yorktown in Virginia and north to Harpers Ferry. [56]

Park supporters tried to capitalize on President Johnson's commitment to beautification, particularly his interest in promoting conservation along the Potomac. Lady Bird Johnson also threw her support behind the preservation effort. The first lady indicated that she had spent several pleasant mornings at Mount Vernon and wrote, "Our Nation has been blessed with a rich scenic heritage, and as our civilization grows it is up to all of us to have the wisdom to preserve nature's corners – and to not diminish – our natural surroundings." She was confident that the American people would support any measures necessary to preserve Mount Vernon to include the viewshed. Lady Bird Johnson later sent another note expressing her support for the park. "So many times over 33 years," she wrote, "I've visited Mount Vernon, taking friends, and always paused with pleasure to drink in the beauty of that view! Generations have loved it and we'll try to keep it so those to come will enjoy it too."[57]

Secretary Udall sent a personal note to Arthur N. Pack, a philanthropist from the Southwest who co-founded the Arizona Senora Desert Museum, reassuring him that under the president's plan for the Potomac, "we're going to do the job at Mt. Vernon right!" Pack's wife Phoebe in turn circulated the note among MVLA supporters, noting that Udall was the "final key" to the problem of adequately preserving the viewshed. Phoebe Pack called Udall to highlight her concerns.[58]

Meanwhile, Secretary Udall told MVLA Regent Beirne that the administration was "extremely grateful" for the "untiring and unselfish efforts" of not only the MVLA but also the other organizations that supported the efforts to preserve the viewshed. He explained that President Johnson had delegated to the Interior Department the responsibility for developing a coordinated program for making the Potomac River Basin a conservation model for the entire country. Udall had recently taken a trip along the Potomac shoreline along with representatives of local jurisdictions and planning organizations, to include the chairman of the Prince George's County Commissioners, the chairman of the Maryland – National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, to establish cooperative relationships with those officials concerned with the

---

[56] E. Walton Opie, "Trouble on the Potomac," *The Commonwealth*, April 1965, Operation Overview Black Binder 111)
[57] Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson to Mrs. M.E. Holderman, March 19, 1965, MVLA Smith Overview 3; Lady Bird Johnson to Paul White, M.D., June 28, 1967, Operation Overview Black Binder IV.
[58] Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall to Arthur N. Pack, March 1, 1965, MVLA Operation Overview 58, *emphasis in original.*

program for the Potomac River. He called this inspection tour, which terminated on the front lawn of Mount Vernon, a "success." It established some basic understandings of the guidelines to be used in developing the Potomac River program and focused attention on some outstanding problem areas in the DC area, such as the proposed Piscataway Park. He closed, "There is no question that the establishment of the park…is an indispensable part of a sound plan to preserve the scenic qualities of the Potomac River, and we assure you we will continue to exert every effort possible to this end." The tour helped draw attention to the problems of the park.[59]

Cooperative Agreements with the Accokeek and Alice Ferguson Foundations

During the struggle to secure appropriations for the park in the early 1960s, the Interior Department continued its negotiations with the Accokeek Foundation to arrive at the cooperative agreement called for in P.L. 87-362. This complex negotiation process took 15 months. The purpose of the agreement was to outline the conditions under which the Accokeek Foundation would donate its lands to the federal government, specifically the Interior Department, and determine how the department and the Foundation would operate jointly. The Accokeek Foundation submitted a preliminary draft agreement in November 1961 soon after Congress passed P.L. 87-362, and the department's lawyers responded. The Accokeek Foundation had indicated that it would donate its lands to the federal government only after the Interior Department had secured all of the other lands or easements within the park boundaries, but Interior officials maintained that the law required the Accokeek Foundation to donate its lands or make a definite commitment to convey them before the U.S. could acquire all of the remaining lands. Moreover, since Congress had not appropriated funds for the remaining lands, the department would have difficulty getting additional funds unless it could assure Congress that the Foundation had conveyed its lands.[60]

The initial draft agreement in 1962 provided that the Accokeek Foundation would donate its property to the federal government under certain conditions. One condition was that the federal government must have secured title in fee or in a lesser interest satisfactory to the Foundation to all of the lands which P.L. 87-362 authorized the secretary to acquire in fee before the Foundation would convey its property to the federal government. Secretary Udall responded that his department sympathized with the Foundation's desire to protect its interests by ensuring that all or a sufficient amount of lands to be included in the park area authorized by P.L. 87-362 had been acquired before the Accokeek Foundation donated its land to

[59] Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall to Mrs. Francis F. Beirne, MVLA Regent, March 18, 1965, MVLA Smith Overview 3; Hunter, 30.
[60] Hunter, 27; Straus, 44.

the federal government. However, it did not believe that this condition met the law's requirement that the Secretary of the Interior receive a commitment from the Foundation to donate its land before he started acquiring the remaining lands for the park.[61]

Secretary Udall reminded the Accokeek Foundation that Congress had not yet appropriated funds to purchase the remaining lands. While the department intended to seek such an appropriation in the next session of Congress, the result remained uncertain. Udall pointed out that the department would be in a weak position when it went before the House and Senate appropriations committees to secure these funds if it could not assure the committees that the Accokeek Foundation had already conveyed their land to the federal government or was in the process of conveying them. As an alternative to the first condition, Udall suggested that the Foundation's interests could be adequately protected by providing in its deed to the U.S. that the title to the land would revert to the Accokeek Foundation if the project was not established within five years.[62]

The Interior Department agreed with the Foundation's objectives as laid out in the agreement that the property be preserved so as to retain as nearly as possible the 18th century view from Mount Vernon. However, the August 25, 1916 legislation creating the National Park Service (39 Stat. 535) required that it administer these properties for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people. The department saw no problem in providing for public enjoyment, while retaining the traditional atmosphere of the region. Its development program would emphasize the historic and archeological features of the area and maintain the view as the Accokeek Foundation wanted. The department planned to begin preparing a detailed plan for the area and would provide it to interested organizations before final approval of the NPS.

The Accokeek Foundation's final condition involved a lease-back of the lands to the Foundation for a "nominal consideration," but Udall found this provision troublesome as well. P.L. 87-362 made no mention of any such agreement, and the department had no general authority to lease lands that it administered under the 1916 legislation. After laying out the department's concerns and conditions, in late January 1962, Udall sent the Accokeek Foundation a version of the draft agreement that the

[61] Stewart T. Udall, Secretary of the Interior, to Straus, January 26, 1962, MVLA Operation Overview 48; Straus, 44.
[62] Udall to Straus, January 26, 1962, MVLA Operation Overview 48.

department believed would provide for the interests of both parties and still meet the legal requirements imposed on the department by the 1916 Organic Act.[63]

The department and the Accokeek Foundation continued to pass draft agreements back and forth for another 12 months, including a *Land Use Plan* offered by the Accokeek Foundation that was countered by an Interior Department map indicating different use areas. This September 1962 map labeled the project "Proposed Piscataway Park," and the name survived.

Secretary Udall signed the final version of the cooperative agreement with the Accokeek Foundation on January 8, 1963, reflecting the compromises that had been carefully hammered out during the long period of negotiations. The agreement stipulated that after certification in writing that the Secretary had acquired "sufficient lands or interests" to ensure preservation of the historic overview from Mount Vernon and Fort Washington, the Accokeek Foundation would donate their lands. To protect the interests of the Accokeek Foundation, both parties agreed that unless the government formally established a park in accordance with P.L. 87-362 within five years, the titles on the Foundation lands would be restored to the Foundation. Under the agreement, the government granted the Foundation "preferential rights" under a "special use permit" issued by the NPS regional director for the next 20 years, with rights of renewal.

The agreement also provided that the Accokeek Foundation would maintain all buildings and facilities on the lands it used and not construct any additional buildings or structures without first getting written approval from the NCR regional director. It stipulated that NPS authorized agents and personnel would have access to these lands at all times. Public access to the lands covered by the special use permits referenced in the agreement would be limited to those persons or groups who obtained permission from either the Accokeek Foundation or the NPS. This provision in the agreement would remain in effect for 20 years and could be renewed for additional 20-year periods. The Alice Ferguson Foundation signed a nearly identical agreement with the department a few months later on May 21, 1963.[64]

Bolton was very pleased with the final agreement between the Accokeek Foundation and the Interior Department and also pleased that the department had signed a similar agreement with the Alice

---

[63] Ibid.

[64] Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall and Frances P. Bolton, "Policy Statement I.c., Cooperative Agreement", January 8, 1963, NACE file: Accokeek Drafts Agreement; Hunter, 28-29; Deed, Alice Ferguson Foundation, February 14, 1968, NACE files; "Cooperative Agreement between the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Alice Ferguson Foundation," May 21, 1963, NACE Files: Alice Ferguson Foundation.

Ferguson Foundation. She was particularly gratified that the owners of those 70-plus parcels had donated scenic easements to the federal government. "Our hearts and our program are strengthened by such support," she added.[65]

With the final agreement signed, Bolton took the opportunity to highlight the many contributions that the Accokeek Foundation had made in its first years. When it was created in 1957, she explained, there was little published information about open space preservation. Thus the Accokeek Foundation launched a series of research studies resulting in the publication of a 1962 monograph, "Studies of the Methods Best Suited to Protecting and Preserving an Area of Great Natural Beauty Along the Maryland Shore of the Potomac River Opposite Mount Vernon." The monograph was currently being widely read and used by others.[66]

In sum, this unique agreement provided that the Accokeek Foundation would donate its lands without cost to the federal government after the Secretary of the Interior had certified that he had acquired a substantial portion of the remaining lands, mainly those covered by easements. If this was not done within five years, the Accokeek Foundation would retain title to the lands. It granted the Accokeek Foundation preferential rights to use the lands along the river for its own purposes. The 1963 cooperative agreement would remain in place for 20 years and automatically renew in twenty-year increments unless the NPS publicly announced why it would not be renewed.[67]

The department's agreements with the Alice Ferguson and Accokeek foundations said nothing about potential conflict between conservation and public demand, but in 1963 the NPS National Capital Region produced a *Land Use Survey of Piscataway Park,* which proposed establishing three zones in the park: a historic, cultural, and natural environment area; a general outdoor recreation area; and an agricultural area. There was also a scenic easement area but this included the large area that would remain in private hands through easements. Included in the survey report was an analysis of available and potential resources and recommendations related to the preservation and use of the park. Acting Regional Director Robert C. Borne noted that the study was not all inclusive and invited comments and questions. The

[65] Frances P. Bolton, The Accokeek Foundation Report of the President, June 6, 1963, LOC Finley Box 1.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Straus, 44

Accokeek Foundation discussed the land use survey at its June 24, 1963, meeting and approved the approach that the survey recommended.[68]

Funding Piscataway Park

Meanwhile, the battle to secure appropriations for the park continued through the mid-1960s. U.S. Representative Hervey G. Machen (D-MD), who had replaced Representative Richard Lankford (D-MD) in January 1965 as the representative for the area in Maryland opposite Mount Vernon, quickly joined the battle for the park. In July 1965, he introduced H.R. 10017 in the House to increase the authorization of funds for the purchase of land at Piscataway Park from the original $937,000 to $3,544,493. He noted that there were only two years left before the deadline when the 151 acres already donated by the Accokeek Foundation, the 345 additional acres committed for donation, and the 850 acres in donated scenic easements would be withdrawn until the park was established.[69]

Interior Department officials wanted to delay legislative action on H.R. 10017 while the NPS completed its studies of its land acquisition programs including the problem of appropriation limitations for land acquisition. Such limitations had prevented the NPS from completing land acquisition programs at a number of authorized national park areas, and they believed a more comprehensive approach might be feasible. The officials anticipated that the results of the NPS study should be available by the start of the second session of the 89th congress and told Congress they planned to defer action on H.R. 10017 until the NPS completed its studies.[70]

Representative Bolton was becoming increasingly frustrated by Congressional delays in appropriating and authorizing funds for the park. In December 1965, finding that the final proposed budget for the Interior Department had again failed to include any funds for the purchase of land across from Mount Vernon or any further action under P.L. 87-362, she sent a strongly worded letter to Secretary Udall. She expressed her deep disappointment that his department was "unwilling to carry through what they've indicated they would do." The only explanation that she had received was that Representative Kirwan would remove any item related to the park, but she had little sympathy for this approach. "I am afraid I come of fighting stock," she told Udall, "and would like to fight out in the open for what I believe to be right."

---

[68] Hunter, 29; Acting Regional Director Robert C. Borne to A. Grim Johnson, Nov 20, 1963, NPS PISC eTIC; NPS, *Land Use Survey of Piscataway Park*, 1963.
[69] Hunter, 31; Moyaone Association, *Smoke Signals*, v. August 1965, No. 4, MVLA Operation Overview 51.
[70] Assistant Secretary of the Interior P.A. Cain to Honorable Wayne N. Aspinall, Chair, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, November 24, 1965, CSM Accokeek Box 18; Hunter, 31.

Referencing the existing Accokeek Foundation scenic easements, she warned that there could be a great loss if the department did not carry through on its part. Bolton sent a similar letter to Representative Anderson on the same day.[71]

Secretary Udall expressed concern for Bolton's position but argued that it was impossible for him to assure her that the department's budget for Fiscal Year 1967 would include funds for land acquisition at Piscataway. Until the president's budget was "firmed up," he could not say what it would include. He assured her, though, that his department was "fully aware" of the need to go ahead with the acquisition program for Piscataway Park "as rapidly as possible" to include both the appropriation of funds currently authorized and the need to secure an increased authorization for appropriations.[72]

Meanwhile, the Interior Department provided its annual site inspection tour for the House and Senate members of the Interior and Appropriations committees. The members traveled by boat from DC and inspected the Piscataway Park site. They then enjoyed a box dinner on the lawn of Mount Vernon so that they could inspect the view. As they gathered at Mount Vernon, George B. Hartzog, Jr., who had succeeded Conrad Wirth as director of the National Park Service in January 1964 and worked diligently to expand the number of units in the National Park System, talked to the distinguished guests about the park project.[73]

Straus continued to try to convey the urgency of the situation, reminding Bolton that they needed to secure the increase in authorized funding before the upcoming Interior appropriation hearings. He asked Bolton to enlist the support of Aspinall and Saylor.[74]

Representative Saylor proved to be very responsive. Addressing Congress on February 21, 1966, during the second session of the 89th Congress, he drew his colleague's attention to a series of recent newspaper editorials highlighting the imminent danger to the view from Mount Vernon if Congress did not act during the current session. The editorials also highlighted the efforts of Representative Machen to prod the administration and the Congress to fulfill the commitment made in 1961 with P.L. 87-362 to save the view from Mount Vernon. Saylor told his colleagues in Congress that Representative Machen's bill deserved

[71] Frances P. Bolton to Secretary Stewart L. Udall, December 8, 1965, MVLA Overview Box 2.
[72] Stewart L. Udall to Bolton, December 17, 1965, MVLA Overview Box 2.
[73] Accokeek Foundation, General Manager's Report No. 3, 1966, LOC Finley Box 2.
[74] Memo, Robert Ware Straus to Francis P. Bolton, February 8, 1966, subj: appropriations for PL 87-362, CSM Accokeek Box 18.

their support. If Congress failed to act during the current session, he warned, they would have failed. Nor could Congress afford to wait on action from the Interior Department.[75]

In March 1966, Representative Machen submitted a bill to preserve the view from Mount Vernon at Piscataway Park (H.R. 13430). The bill would increase the authorization for the park's funding from $937,000 to $4,132,000 reflecting the rising cost of real estate during the intervening five years. Interior officials finally wrote Congress to endorse action to increase the authorization in order to meet "skyrocketing" land prices. Bolton reported to David Finley that the situation was "critical" since the agreements to donate land and scenic easements would expire before Congress could act at the next session. If Congress did not pass the authorization and appropriations at the current session, she warned, "We may lose much [of] what we have gained over the last eight months." Finley in response sent letters to several members of Congress asking their support for HR 13430.[76]

Congress approved the authorization bill on July 19, 1966 as P.L. 89-513. P.L. This law modified the 1961 legislation in some policy areas and dramatically increased the funding authorization for the purchase of lands in the park. The law replaced the word description of the park boundaries with a single drawing of the same area and altered the boundary of the scenic protection area slightly to more closely follow contour lines and property lines. It also authorized the exchange within the park area of federal property for non-federal property. In addition, the law reinstated Marshall Hall within park boundaries.[77]

The next few months were frustrating for the park's supporters. Although P.L. 89-513 authorized funds for the park, Congress still had not appropriated those funds, and Chairman Kirwan continued to oppose spending any more money on Piscataway Park. The timetable for securing appropriations was becoming tight. Time was running out on the five-year limitation in a cooperative agreement that the Department of the Interior had made with the Accokeek Foundation and Alice Ferguson Foundation in 1963 requiring that substantially all the land and easements inside the park boundary be acquired by August 1967 or the donated land and easements would revert to their owners.

---

[75] Speech of Honorable John P. Saylor, "Mount Vernon," February 21, 1966, *Congressional Record*, 89th Cong., 2nd session, LOC Finley Box 2.

[76] "Off the Record with Congressman Hervey G. Machen," March 30, 1966, v. 1, no. 12, CSM Accokeek Box 4; Bolton to Dr. David Finley, March 14, 1966, LOC Finley Box 2; David Finley to Bolton, March 17, 1966, ibid.

[77] P.L. 89-513, 89th Cong., July 19, 1966, "An Act to Amend the Act of October 4, 1961," Hunter, 31-33, 58; U.S. House, 95th Congress, 2nd session, hearings, U.S. House Subcommittee on Appropriations, Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1979, Part 8, 101.

Based on the recent 1966 law, Representative Saylor explained to his colleagues, the Accokeek and Ferguson foundations agreed to donate land, and 130 private landowners had donated scenic easements to the Department of the Interior. Saylor called this a "shining example" of a project where everyone has done their part and contributed except for the federal government. Unless the federal government acted at this session of Congress, he said, "this great pilot project will dismally fail." Other states, counties, individuals, and organizations that had watched the development of this unique project would become discouraged. Fortunately, said Saylor, Machen had introduced a bill to get Congress moving again. To lose all that had been accomplished would be, he added, "a real tragedy." It would mean the loss of millions of dollars' worth of lands being donated without cost and the loss of the pilot project in which federal funds were outweighed by foundation and private donations.[78]

Later recalling these events, Director Hartzog explained that bills related to the National Park System originated in the House Appropriations Subcommittee of the Committee on the Interior Department and Related Agencies. He knew that for years Kirwan, as chair of this subcommittee, had refused to appropriate funds for Piscataway Park. Kirwan not only chaired the subcommittee, but also was one of the most senior members of the House Appropriations Committee. In 1966 Hartzog realized that Kirwan would never appropriate the funds necessary to complete the park as Congress had authorized. In the Senate, Senator Alan Bible (D-NV) chaired both the Senate appropriations subcommittee and the authorizing committee on national parks. Senator Bible had repeatedly included appropriations for the park in the Senate appropriations bill, but Hartzog added he invariably lost the money in conference committee because of Kirwan's objections.[79]

Although appropriation bills originate in the House, both the House and Senate through their respective appropriations committees consider the president's budget independently. The appropriate subcommittees of the House and Senate appropriations committees hold separate hearings on the budget and pass separate appropriations bills. Thus an item that was reduced or eliminated in the House subcommittee may be increased or added back in the Senate appropriation bills. Differences in the House and Senate bills are resolved in a conference committee. After several defeats in conference committee, Senator Bible informed Hartzog that he would not include any additional funds for land acquisition at

---

[78] Speech of Hon John P. Saylor, "Mount Vernon," February 21, 1966, *Congressional Record*, 89th Cong., 2nd session, LOC Finley Box 2.

[79] George B. Hartzog, Jr., *Battling for the National Parks,* (Mt. Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell, 1988), 148-149; Kathy Mengak, *Reshaping Our National Parks and their Guardians: The Legacy of George B. Hartzog, Jr.*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012, 136-137.

Piscataway Park until Hartzog could persuade Kirwan not to object when the matter came before the conference committee. Hartzog then went to see Kirwan and explained that real estate values were rising and if the land was not purchased soon the deadline set in the authorization would pass. A man of shrewd political instincts, he decided not to ask Kirwan to vote for the appropriation. Rather he simply asked him not to publicly oppose the bill when Senator Bible brought it up again. Perhaps in response to Hartzog's arguments, Kirwan agreed and Bible went forward with the bill again. This time, Hartzog recounted, the bill made it through conference committee and the park finally got appropriations for land purchases and scenic easements.[80]

The House bill in spring 1967 included no funding for Piscataway Park. However, the Senate bill provided for a $2 million appropriation and the legislation went into conference committee. Congress ultimately approved a $1.5 million appropriation for the park. By then the NPS had quietly suspended work on acquiring scenic easements after the 151 easements mentioned earlier had been donated, and proposed that the Accokeek Foundation lands donated to the federal government be resold to others. The Accokeek Foundation forcefully rejected this. *The Washington Post* called Congress's action "the conservation blunder of the year." Since 1961 the Accokeek Foundation had donated 151 acres. It had committed 345 acres for donation and nearly 200 private landowners had donated scenic easements for more than 1,000 acres. If Congress defaulted in purchasing these easements, however, starting in August all the landowners would be released from their pledges and the land would become "a wilderness of subdivisions."[81]

In mid-September 1967, Bolton conveyed the deeds to 133 acres of shoreline to Secretary Udall, along with a request that the government acquire the rest of the land proposed for the park. The land she deeded, valued at approximately $495,000, had been acquired by three private foundations and held in trust until Congress approved appropriations to reimburse those foundations. Bolton reminded Udall that this was the first time since 1964 that the department had taken action on the project that Udall had called a "top priority." She indicated that the Accokeek Foundation continued to hold another 500 acres

[80] Hartzog, 149-151; Mengak, 138.
[81] "Incredible Blunder," *The Washington P*ost, May 2, 1967, Operation Overview Black Binder IV; U.S. House, 95th Congress, 2nd session, hearings, U.S. House Subcommittee on Appropriations, Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1979, Part 8, 101, this comes from testimony from Robert Straus; Rep. Hervey G. Machen letter, April 26, 1967, MVLA VR Burdick Overview file.

that it would donate to the federal government as soon as the Department of the Interior acquired several hundred more acres for the park. It also needed to obtain 1,500 acres in scenic easements.[82]

The acquisitions had to be made quickly because of the five-year restriction in the 1963 cooperative agreement between the Accokeek Foundation and the Interior Department discussed below, and there were challenges. The Accokeek Foundation board of directors met on June 19, 1967. Recognizing that the lands they had donated might be returned to them with the deadline only a few months away, they resolved to find a way to break the impasse. Suddenly, the NPS aided by the Accokeek Foundation and Moyaone Association received several more easement donations, and the NPS was able to exercise purchase options on roughly 122 acres. Then on January 5, 1968, the NPS made a purchase agreement for the 97-acre Smith tract. On February 2, 1968, the Interior Department certified that the Secretary had acquired sufficient land or interests to trigger the 1963 cooperative agreement. As a result, in 1968 both the Accokeek Foundation and the Alice Ferguson Foundation conveyed the lands in accordance with the agreements they had signed with the Interior Department five years earlier.[83]

After years of struggle, on George Washington's birthday, a cold, clear afternoon on February 22, 1968, Secretary Udall formally dedicated the park at a colorful ceremony at Bryan Point at Accokeek attended by several hundred people. The ceremony was sponsored by the Accokeek Foundation, Alice Ferguson Foundation, Moyaone Association, NPS, and the Department of the Interior. Attendees included Francis Bolton, Chief Turkey Tayac of the Piscataway tribe, Belva Jensen, Robert Ware Straus, Rosamond Beirne, County Commissioner (later Congresswoman) Gladys Noon Spellman, and Congressman Hervey Machen. It had taken more than seven years since President Kennedy signed P.L. 87-362 authorizing the park, but the local and national interests that had pushed for the park finally succeeded in formalizing it. Bolton retired from Congress later that year, though she would continue to serve as the Accokeek Foundation's president for another decade.[84]

Wall used the dedication as an occasion to acknowledge his "good fortune" in working with Bolton and praise her for her role, writing "Your vision, your generosity and your leadership have made it possible for us to secure against modern encroachment the serene, unspoiled setting of these historic structures

---

[82] "Finish Up Piscataway, Representative Bolton Urges Udall," *The Washington Post,* September 19, 1967, Operation Overview Black Binder IV.
[83] Hunter, 34-35.
[84] Invitation, "The Establishment of Piscataway Park," MVLA Smith Overview 3; Wilton Corkern, "A Service of Lasting Value," 6; Hartzog, 148; Straus, 60.

U.S. Representative Frances Bolton and Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall at the Piscataway Park dedication ceremony, February 22, 1968. (NPS)

From left to right, Frances Bolton, Chief Turkey Tayac, Belva Jensen, Robert Ware Straus, Rosamond Bierne, Gladys Spellman, and Hervey Machen, at the Piscataway Park dedication ceremony, February 22, 1968. (NPS)

which our founders preserved."[85] Director Hartzog later credited Bolton as the "moving force" in establishing Piscataway Park.[86]

Tayac, a stakeholder that had primarily been left out of much of the formal legislative and land acquisition process of incorporating the land for the park also used the highly visible atmosphere of the dedication event to bring attention to his own causes and concerns. After the dedication, Tayac approached Udall on the podium, shaking his hand, and congratulated him on the momentous achievement. Tayac and Gladys Spellman had been allies in their attempt to recognize the Piscataway tribe's affiliation to the Moyaone village and ossuary site throughout the budget and land acquisition process during the 1960s. Although Udall appeared to interact positively with Tayac in the highly public setting, it would take decades of activism, political maneuvering, and cultural identity validation for Turkey Tayac, his descendants, and the Piscataway Indian Nation to achieve their own goals. (See American Indian Cultural Revival/ Chief Turkey Tayac Interment in Chapter 4)

Accokeek Foundation Early Years

As the park was established and issues related to funding and the cooperative agreement were slowly resolved in the early 1960s, the Accokeek Foundation further defined its plans and projects. Its ongoing efforts related to what it called the Wildlife Development Area were beginning to bear fruit. The National Colonial Farm had made "considerable progress." The farm now had an active board of regents and the first experimental crops had been planted and harvested. Working with the public school system, the educational program at the farm was successfully underway, and the Girl Scout Camp was actively used. Plans for developing the auxiliary areas for the National Arboretum and the National Zoo were still in negotiations. In addition, more work remained related to science education.

The search for funding for its plans and projects remained a constant challenge. During these early years Bolton's donations remained the "mainstay" of the Accokeek Foundation, though the Piscataway Company had donated a few acres adjoining the Wildlife Development Area. As Straus explained, "One of the factors contributing to this lack of concrete progress in securing funds has been the absence of widespread publicity about the important contributions of the Foundation to date." The Accokeek Foundation had tried to minimize publicity in the past out of fear that it would drive up the price of land that it wanted to acquire. No land had come on the market during the previous two years, he noted, but

[85] Charles C. Wall to Frances P. Bolton, January 8, 1968, MVLA FPB File 6.
[86] Hartzog, 148.

the question of publicity "remains a difficult one." He advised the trustees to review the issue each year to determine whether they should change their procedures. Low density zoning was an approach worth watching when it came to protecting against rising land prices. "In addition," Straus wrote, "consideration should be given to a possible alternative to land purchase – the securing of 'conservation easements,' or the purchase of specified rights in property as an alternative to outright purchase of the land itself."[87]

Obtaining the land, funds, and the detailed program needed to achieve the mission laid out in its charter was no small task for the Accokeek Foundation. As noted earlier, when Bolton and Straus first met in 1957 they had agreed on the extent of the lands that needed to be acquired to achieve their shared goal. This task fell to the Piscataway Company. A further agreement among Bolton, the Moyaone Association, and the Piscataway Company provided that the Piscataway Company would purchase from Bolton the lands further inland along Bryan Point Road and would place those under the company's existing covenants. They would sell these parcels to enlarge the community and use the revenue to repay Bolton for the note she had accepted in payment for the property, which was not an easy process. Straus later recounted some of the complexities and challenges of these land transactions. He conceded that they were not successful with all of the landowners along the six-mile waterfront. Some residents had no desire to sell; some disagreed with the objectives of the Accokeek Foundation. Those who purchased lands in from the shoreline had to agree in writing to the covenants limiting parcels to a minimum of five acres, cutting trees, and other restrictions.[88]

Scenic Easements and Taxes

While the land donations from the Accokeek Foundation were critical to establishing the park, scenic easements were equally important. Faced with the challenge of acquiring the land for the newly authorized Piscataway Park, NPS officials adopted a creative approach in administering the park land – the use of scenic easements. Piscataway Park remains a prime example of using scenic easements to protect a visual landscape and has served as a model in this regard. An easement is a legally binding agreement between the owner of the land encumbered by the easement and the holder of the easement that restricts the development and use of the land to achieve certain conservation goals, such as the preservation of wildlife habitat, open space, or agricultural land. A landowner who conveys a

[87] Robert Ware Straus, Accokeek Foundation, to Frances P. Bolton, Special Report for Annual Meeting, June 17, 1960, LOC Finley Box 1.
[88] Straus, 28, 30-32.

conservation or scenic easement to a government agency or a land trust retains ownership of the land, subject to the easement, and the right to continue to use the land in any manner that is consistent with the terms or stated purpose of the easement. The landowner grants some of the development rights related to his land in order to promote the preservation of the environmental and scenic interests in the property. It is less than conveying the fee simple title and thus considered less valuable than having the full fee value. Its role in scenic preservation is to achieve the greatest impact for the least money.

The use of scenic easements continued to play a critical role in ensuring the wooded and open character of the land along the Maryland shoreline across from Mount Vernon, and it had a significant impact on the park throughout its history. The federal government would acquire the core of the viewshed and the outlying areas would be subject to protection through conservation easements. The NPS generally preferred not to use what were called "inholdings," though at the time roughly one-third of the units in the park system included some privately held tracts. As long as the NPS lacked exclusive control over the lands, they posed a threat to the integrity of the park. In the past this had resulted in land uses that conflicted with park values.[89]

The use of scenic easements in the National Park System to protect scenic values was not without precedent. The NPS began to use scenic easements in the 1930s with the creation of several national parkways. It acquired scenic easements when building the Mount Vernon Memorial Parkway (later the George Washington Memorial Parkway) in the early 1930s. Some of the first legislation concerning rural vistas appeared during the scenic roadway movement of the 1930s. The NPS became involved in the creation of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina and Virginia, begun in 1935. In the 1930s it also became involved in the Natchez Trace Parkway in Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi and Skyline Drive in Virginia, which opened in 1939. The NPS chose to use scenic easements at the Blue Ridge Parkway and Natchez Trace Parkway in an effort to keep down costs, saving the agency the expense of purchasing the land outright.

In 1941 the NPS had put out a seven-page guidance document governing the acquisition of land for national parkways that included references to scenic easements. It said, "Scenic easements may be introduced in order to secure a maximum of protection without increasing the amount of land to be acquired in fee simple." The guidance defined scenic easement as "a servitude devised to permit land to

[89] Sprinkle, 7; NPS, "NPS Mission 66 Report," September 1955, 19-20; NPS, NRHP Registration Form, draft, 2011, NACE files, PISC National Register, 42.

remain in private ownership for its normal agricultural or residential uses and at the same time placing control over the future use of the land to maintain its scenic value for the parkway." The 1941 guidance went on to lay out some of the specific requirements related to scenic easements.[90]

Though there were these precedents, the concept of scenic easements was not widely recognized until more than a decade later. In the late 1950s use of easements began to play more of a role as part of conservation efforts, and questions concerning legislative mandate, methods of assessing value, and enforcement created confusion.[91] Bolton argued that the creation of a system of easements that allowed private owners to receive some benefit for donating a conservation interest in their land and took advantage of amendments to the Maryland state constitution and the revised state and local tax laws, was a major accomplishment of Operation Overview. [92]

In the late 1950s, Accokeek planners had concluded that the public view from Mount Vernon and the private property rights of the Moyaone residents could be adequately protected if the residents agreed to donate scenic easements to the federal government, specifically the Interior Department. At the time, easements were largely unknown or untested when it came to use for private historic preservation situations. Maryland had no legislation that would provide for compensation of landowners who surrendered specific rights to their property. Some Moyaone residents thought the easements were redundant since their association's covenant agreements already limited their ability to alter the landscape. Also, there was no obvious economic benefit for preserving open space and scenic vistas.[93]

The use of scenic easements became even more critical and urgent after President Kennedy authorized the creation of the park in 1961. The Moyaone Association continued to explore the possible effectiveness of scenic easements as a tool for protecting private property and the view from Mount Vernon. In January 1961, the association established a special committee on easements. It also took a survey of Moyaone landowners finding that ten supported easements, ten opposed them, and five were undecided. As word of the Moyaone easement plan spread, opposition mounted and the relationship

---

[90] NPS, "Requirements and Procedures to Govern the Acquisition of Land for National Parkways," Approved June 9, 1941, 4, CSM Accokeek Box 10.
[91] Straus to Frederick Gutheim, "Public Use of Private Land," 22 July 1959, College of Southern Maryland (CSM), Southern Maryland Studies Center, Moyaone Collection (MC) Box 4.
[92] Sprinkle, 7; "Remarks of the honorable Frances P. Bolton at the White House Conference on Natural Beauty, Water, and Waterfronts Panel," May 24, 1965, MVLA Overview.
[93] Meringolo, 8, see Nancy McLaughlin, "Conservation Easements – A Troubled Adolescence," *Journal of Land Resources and Environmental Literature* 26¸ no. 1 (2005): 47-56.

between the local farm families and the Moyaone residents deteriorated. Some Moyaone residents were reluctant to support the use of scenic easements and the creation of the park out of concern for the rights of the farmers.[94]

Throughout the 1960s, the concept of scenic easements continued to gain acceptance. At Cape Cod National Seashore, for example, officials used local zoning requirements to install controls over land use on private property within the established park boundary.[95] Another more recent precedent for the use of scenic easements was Ozark National Scenic Riverways in southeastern Missouri, where the federal government sought to maintain the pastoral scenes along the river(s) so it bought a scenic easement under which the owners of the land agreed never to develop it with buildings, houses, or other elements that would intrude on the pastoral setting. Under such easements the public did not acquire a right to use the land for access to the rivers or for other purposes. Director Hartzog maintained that if the land was farmland or pasture the cost of a scenic easement or an access easement was usually much less than buying fee in the land.[96]

The final legislation (P.L. 88-492) creating Ozark National Scenic Riverways, August 27, 1964, provided for the use of scenic easements. Establishing the park unit entailed acquisition of no more than 65,000 acres then in private ownership, with future plans to negotiate for roughly 15,000 additional acres in state park land. Scenic easements would be an option. The legislation also revealed a paradox that the National Park Service continues to face in many of its park units. The NPS accommodated hundreds of thousands of tourists at the park but at the same time strove to protect the area's sensitive habitats, which, because of increased recreational visitation, faced greater human impact. Indeed, National Park Service history has reflected the conflicting ideas regarding the debate between ecological preservation and accommodating mass tourism.[97]

Despite these precedents, to a great extent Straus was correct when he called the use of scenic easements in the early 1960s to assemble Piscataway Park "a bold experiment." P.L. 87-362 was one of the first federal laws authorizing the acquisition of park land that relied so heavily on obtaining scenic easements to meet its requirements. The area of the proposed park was separated into two parts, the

---

[94] Meringolo, 10, see Accokeek Project Heritage Archives)
[95] Sprinkle, 7, See Francis P. Burling, *The Birth of Cape Cod National Seashore*, Plymouth (MA, Leyden Press, 1978).
[96]Hartzog, 257-258.
[97] Will Sarvis, "A Difficult Legacy: Creation of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways," *The Public Historian*, V. 24, No. 1, 31-52.

smaller section along the river where the government would seek to acquire fee simple titles to the land, and the larger portion where the government would acquire scenic easements. During the congressional hearings on the proposed legislation, members of the Moyaone Association, Accokeek Foundation, and others had testified that many current landowners were willing to donate scenic easements to the federal government. Some argued that this assurance was crucial to passage of the bill.[98]

Interior officials conferred at length with the Moyaone Association and individual landowners about the desired content of the scenic easements deed they would be offered. Moyaone residents debated this in late 1961. The committee that the Moyaone Association had created to study the easement issue held a series of meetings from December to February 1962 and mailed a proposed sample easement to all members. Twenty-six members signed a petition supporting the creation of the park and indicating that they were willing to donate easements on their land, while a minority expressed opposition. After long debate, at its March 30 meeting the Moyaone Association adopted a resolution reiterating its support for implementing P.L. 87-362 and recommending that the sample easement agreement be used as the basis for negotiation with individual property owners. The easement agreement included a provision that the easement would terminate if the U.S. failed to acquire fee simple or lesser interest in "substantially all" the lands described in the act, except for improved residential property, within five years from the date of the deed. The Interior Department adopted the easement language that the Moyaone association provided and used it as the basis for negotiations. The time limits were written into deed agreements with both the Accokeek Foundation and Alice Ferguson Foundation.[99]

In 1966, the Interior Department contracted with the Accokeek Foundation to prepare a study of scenic easements, drawing upon the Foundation's own experience. More specifically, it granted the Accokeek Foundation $20,000 for a study on the "Economic Basis for Scenic Easements." The Foundation trustees had approved the study a few years earlier contingent on funding. The study required staff who were experts in land economics, competent planners with experience in conservation and preservation, and lawyers with experience drafting legislation. The staff included Dr. Spencer M. Smith, Jr., Frederick Gutheim, Ray S. Thurman, Dixie Otis, and Frank Whalen. The Accokeek Foundation submitted the comprehensive study in October 1967.[100] It is of particular interest that a federal agency (the Interior

[98] Straus, 37; Hunter, 37-38.
[99] Hunter, 38-40.
[100] "Accokeek Foundation Receives $20,000," CSM Accokeek Box 8; Hunter, 40. [See "A Study Analysis of The Problems of Preserving Recreational and Open-Space Lands," Progress Report #1, December 1966 (contract no. 7-14-07-3) in Accokeek files]

Department) funded this study and that it gave a grant to a private foundation whose president (Bolton) was a sitting member of Congress to conduct the study.

Moyaone Reserve residents wanted greater scenic and environmental protection than the local government provided. This is evidenced by the fact that in the 1950s some property owners had voluntarily accepted a land use covenant requiring a minimum five-acre lot for each residence, no commercial uses, and strict controls over the natural landscape. As members of the Moyaone Association they required the same covenant for all future sales from land the association owned. Farmers faced similar taxation issues. They joined forces with the conservationists in an effort to amend the Maryland state constitution to permit differential tax assessments according to land use. The association played a prominent role in this effort. Though Moyaone Reserve residents were under the five-acre covenant, they were assessed and taxed as if they could subdivide their lots into a number of more expensive lots and sell them.[101]

Yet, many believed that a property owner who donated a scenic easement to the government had given something of value and should receive tax relief for this charitable gift. Some Moyaone Association members worked to change state law to enable local governments to provide tax incentives for the preservation of open space. Under the current Maryland state tax code, the value of land was determined by its development potential, not its actual use. This hurt both farmers and historic conservationists because there was no incentive for maintaining open space or working the land. Two Moyaone Association members, Belva Jensen and Dixie Otis, often went to the state legislature to highlight the value of retaining open space and the potential use of scenic easements as a conservation tool.[102] Jensen and Otis made some allies in the legislature and were able to influence the tax code.

Before 1960, government control over land use along the Maryland shore was almost non-existent and subject to change. Recently approved Prince George's County zoning laws generally permitted residential occupancy on lots of one-half acre if there was no sewage system and one-quarter if there were. Also, Maryland law required that tax assessments be uniform and reflect the highest and best possible use of the land. The Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission only had advisory powers over the county.[103]

---

[101] Hunter, 36-37; Straus, 46, 51.
[102] Meringolo, 11, Nancy Wagner, untitled, *Smoke Signals*, February 4, 1965.
[103] Ibid.

In 1965 the Maryland legislature authorized local jurisdictions to grant property tax credits for landowners who donated scenic easements. On May 5, 1965, Maryland's governor signed a law to encourage landowners to donate scenic easements on the Potomac shore. The 1965 law allowed several Maryland counties, Prince George's, Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's, and Montgomery, to provide a tax credit for conveyance of a scenic easement.[104] The local press called this "a major step" toward fulfilling President Johnson's and Secretary Udall's plans for developing the Potomac as "a model stream."[105]

This change in state law facilitated a change in county law. In 1966, Prince George's County became the first local jurisdiction in the nation to grant property tax credits for easement donations. The signing ceremony took place at Mount Vernon, reflecting the important role that preserving the viewshed had played. In passing this measure, the county led the way for thousands of local jurisdictions to do the same and established a precedent that allowed the conservation easement to become a dominant tool for land conservation and the use of tax benefits for preservation in the U.S. The law provided a tax credit of 50 percent on the assessed value of those lands subject to a scenic easement preserving them in their natural state. Passage of the Prince George's County legislation helped ease tensions between the farmers and Moyaone Association members.[106]

Finally, the issue of national income taxation related to scenic easements also had to be resolved. In August 1968 the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) prepared a study of scenic easements at Piscataway Park. The IRS ruled that conservation easement donations could also be deducted from federal income tax. Though the IRS agreed that a scenic easement was a valid gift, estimating the value of that donation proved to be a challenge. Three appraisers examined the question of easement values in the Piscataway Park area, and their findings were inconclusive when it came to determining whether a scenic easement increased or diminished the value of a property. Meanwhile, the roughly 70 donors of scenic easements in the area had simply filed their annual tax returns with a charitable gift deduction on the easement valued at either 50 percent of the assessed value of the land or 25 percent of the market value. The IRS apparently did not reject any of these claims, and the matter rested.[107]

In 1968, the Alice Ferguson Foundation transferred ownership of approximately 85 acres of land between the current Hard Bargain Farm property and the Potomac River to the U.S. to ensure that the land would

---

[104] Hunter, 41; Straus, 50, see excerpt on page 133.
[105] Accokeek Foundation, Report of the General Manager for the Month of May 1965, LOC Finley Box 1.
[106] Meringolo, 11; Wilton Corkern, "A Service of Lasting Value," 6.
[107] Hunter, 42-43.

be protected from development. The Alice Ferguson Foundation donated the land when the park was created on the condition that it would retain the right to use the land for activities consistent with the NPS mission and the Alice Ferguson Foundation's own educational mission. The cooperative agreement with the NPS required the approval of the NCR Director for various activities, such as new development and capital improvements, on the otherwise private property. Section 3, part E of the agreement states: "No additional buildings, structures, or other physical facilities shall be constructed on said lands by the Alice Ferguson Foundation, Inc., without first obtaining written approval of the Regional Director of the National Capital Region, National Park Service." The agreement also stated that the Alice Ferguson Foundation could apply for NPS special use permits to actively use roughly 225 acres of federal land inside the park for their programs and activities. [108]

The NPS and Alice Ferguson Foundation signed a scenic easement on February 14, 1968, which stated in section 8: "the Foundation may erect such buildings as are required in connection with its major education and community interests and existing farm building may remain or new farm buildings may be erected if required to further the Foundation's educational and agricultural program; providing the location and type of the new buildings have written approval of the Secretary of the Interior or his authorized representative prior to construction."[109]

Nearly a decade after the park was authorized, the nature and shape of the park was still being formed. In its 1969 annual report, the MVLA observed that even after February 22, 1968, when Secretary Udall declared Piscataway Park "essentially complete," a scenic overview was still not secure as long as part of the area remained open to development. The MVLA complained that Interior Department budget for Piscataway Park had been repeatedly reduced or cut. It noted critically, "it is difficult to reconcile this dreary situation with all the brave talk in high places about conservation and historic preservation."[110]

Conclusion

During the 1960s there were some significant progress in conserving the park's cultural and natural resources. The Accokeek Creek Site Complex, for example, was given National Register status in 1966. By the end of the 1960s, the park had been firmly established with the conveyance of scenic easements and

[108] NACE, "Development of Energy Efficient Visitor Center and Student Educational Facilities at the Alice Ferguson Foundation's Hard Bargain Farm Environmental Center in the Scenic Easement of Piscataway Park, Environmental Assessment," May 2012, 6.
[109] Ibid.
[110] MVLA, 1969 Annual Report.

purchase of land in fee, but the young park would face new challenges in the coming decades. At the same time the movement to create and fund the park was transforming the meaning and values associated with the landscape. The focus of the park preservation movement was shifting from the agricultural heritage of the Accokeek area to the land's scenic value.

CHAPTER 4

REFINING AND EXPANDING THE PARK, 1970 – 1990

The 1970s and 1980s were a period of expansion for Piscataway Park but also a time for further development and refinement of measures to protect the park's rich cultural resources. At the end of 1976, the park encompassed approximately 4,217 acres. Of this 1,455 acres had been acquired in fee, while 2,752 acres had been obtained through scenic easement.[1]

On October 17, 1977, Representative Joseph (Joe) Skubitz (R-KS) introduced H.R. 9630, which included authorizations for a number of historic sites and monuments, along with $2 million for Piscataway Park "planning, site rehabilitation, and development." The NPS suggested that the House Interior subcommittee reduce that amount to $934,000 but agreed to reexamine the estimate in January. NPS furnished a new estimate of $2,579,000 for five years to reflect the increase in property values. Representative Skubitz, however, kept the $2 million park authorization as part of a new bill, H.R. 12536, introduced on May 3, 1978. On November 10, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed P.L. 95-625 authorizing a development ceiling of $2 million for Piscataway Park. On November 10, 1978, Piscataway Park was formally dedicated and a bronze plaque unveiled in honor of Frances P. Bolton who had purchased Bryan's Point Farm 23 years earlier and fought so hard to create the park.[2]

In 1979 Piscataway Park was added to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), marking a key milestone in the history of the park and helping to ensure its continued preservation mission.[3] The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, authorized the NPS to maintain a comprehensive National Register of Historic Places. Under this law, National Register properties, both locally significant properties and national historic landmarks in both public and private ownership, would receive special consideration in federal project planning and various forms of preservation assistance. Piscataway Park, created to preserve the natural quality of the Maryland shore across from Mount Vernon, largely through the acquisition of scenic easements, is the only unit in the National Park System existing primarily for the scenic protection of another property. With the enactment of the NHPA, historical parks were entered into the NRHP. Thus the actions of the NPS and other federal agencies

---

[1] "Statement for Management Piscataway Park," January 1992, 1-2, NACE files: Legislative History.
[2] Wilbur Harvey Hunter, "Creating Piscataway Park: A History of Legislation" (Accokeek Foundation 1979), 53-55.
[3] "National Register of Historic Places, Nomination Form, Piscataway Park," approved August 3, 1979.

affecting those parks became subject to review by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a new federal agency established by the act.[4]

Marshall Hall

One major area of expansion during this period related to the Marshall Hall property. When Congress authorized Piscataway Park in 1961, it had excluded Marshall Hall. Joseph I. Goldstein, the controversial Maryland entrepreneur who owned Marshall Hall, had grown up near the water in Calvert County, Maryland, and in the 1950s began to take an interest in water transportation. In late 1958 or early 1959 he arranged the financial backing to purchase the Washington assets of the transportation company Wilson Excursion Lines (WEL), and the wharf. At the same time Goldstein purchased the Marshall Hall lease from WEL, giving him control over the amusement park devices and other "personal" property at Marshall Hall for twelve years. In 1958 a group of investors known as Pot O' Gold, Inc., had built a concession area in the park that included a snack bar, cocktail bar, and a building named "Happyland" containing more than 180 slot machines, with Goldstein as an investor. In the 1960s, Goldstein had to confront the declining public and political support for gambling in Maryland that was cutting into his income from his Pot O' Gold gambling interest. The State of Maryland would ban gambling in 1968 further limiting his profits. He planned a real estate development to replace the dying amusement park.[5]

The original plans for establishing Piscataway Park had included the Marshall Hall property, but with intense lobbying Goldstein had managed to temporarily save the property from being included in the 1961 Piscataway Park legislation. Despite stiff opposition from Representatives Mike Kirwan, Bolton, Saylor, and Aspinall and Senators Charles Matthias and J. Glenn Beall of Maryland who at various points sought to secure Marshall Hall, Goldstein pushed forward with his plans for development. He expanded his original investment, buying several parcels around the Marshall Hall property in the early 1960s such as the Fort Washington Marina on the northern side of the mouth of Piscataway Creek. In 1969 Goldstein purchased the remaining Marshall Hall property. He later sold this land to a company he created called Star Enterprises and launched a series of development projects. But his development plans met opposition from many political and financial figures. Traditional amusement parks around the country to

[4] National Park Service, *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (National Park Service, 2005), 65, 71-72.
[5] Reynolds Scott-Childress, "History of the Marshall Hall Property," Department of History, University of Maryland, 2007, 316, 318-320, 333; Robert Ware Straus, *The Possible Dream: Saving George Washington's View* (Accokeek Foundation, 1988), 84-85.

include the Marshall Hall Amusement Park had become dated and were in decline in the 1960s, with many closing.[6]

Meanwhile, opposition to Goldstein's development plans grew. During the legislative process for creating the park, the Interior Department reversed its position and told Congress that the Marshall Hall property should be transferred to the scenic easement area. The Accokeek Foundation agreed to go along with the weakened bill exempting the Marshall Hall land if that land would at least be under scenic easements. The amusement park was to be protected by a grandfather clause that left undisturbed anything left on the property on the date the bill became law. Straus and other park supporters anticipated that the decaying amusement park would "eventually wither away." They told Goldstein that if he agreed to donate the scenic easements for the land, they would not fight to keep the amusement park in the taking area as planned. Goldstein agreed and the bill passed as amended.[7]

Although in 1961 Goldstein had indicated that he would donate scenic easements in return for removing Marshall Hall from the federal fee acquisition area, by 1966 he was denying that he had agreed to this. To protect his development from the federal government, in 1967 Goldstein offered to sell a scenic easement to his waterfront property in exchange for a guarantee that he could proceed as he wished with the rest of his property. When the Department of the Interior rejected his terms, Goldstein shifted to another tactic.[8]

Goldstein proposed a vast riverfront development at Marshall Hall that would include high rise hotels and condominiums. In 1970 he announced plans to transform the Marshall Hall site into a $12 million theme park, a "Disney-on-the-Potomac," using the nation's history as the basis for rides, concessions, and exhibitions. He asked Charles County officials to change the zoning of his land from rural/residential to commercial/industrial, which would dramatically increase its appraised value. Despite objections from local landowners, the county commissioners agreed to rezone Goldstein's land as a way to increase the county's tax revenue. In February 1970 they agreed to rezone 113 acres of the Marshall Hall tract from rural/agricultural to commercial in order to permit the development of a theme park with rides and other

[6] Scott-Childress, 338-342; Robert G. Stanton, interview by author, March 21, 2017.
[7] Straus, 85.
[8] Scott-Childress, 343; Hunter, 44.

attractions. There was a public outcry against this planned development from adjoining landowners and in editorials in leading newspapers around the country.[9]

Some neighboring landowners used their own funds to bring a lawsuit to reverse the county's zoning decision. The Accokeek Foundation joined with MVLA and the Moyaone landowners in a lawsuit to set aside the commercial zoning that the county had granted at Marshall Hall. Bolton and others argued that the Goldstein property was key to preserving the Mount Vernon overlook. It was by far the largest tract left without the necessary control to protect the view. The Charles County Circuit Court ultimately ruled in favor of the adjoining landowners in the lawsuit and reversed the rezoning decision.[10]

The Interior Department, now under Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel, vigorously opposed Goldstein's development plans. Like the neighboring landowners mentioned above, the department brought suit to overturn rezoning measure. It also initiated a condemnation suit to obtain scenic easements over 322 acres of the Goldstein property without offering Goldstein any concessions. In November 1970, the Charles County Commissioners indicated that they would be willing to reconsider the zoning matter. A few days later the Secretary signed the final easement condemnation documents on Marshall Hall, though he failed to inform the county commissioners. In January 1971 Goldstein's attorney protested the condemnation suit to the NPS and indicated that his client would push ahead in exerting his property rights.[11]

Meanwhile, Goldstein had become impatient with the federal government's slowness in making an offer on his property. He threatened to cut down a certain number of large trees along the river every day until the NPS purchased his land, making it clear in the press that this would make his amusement park much more visible from Mount Vernon. In February 1971 Goldstein began wielding a chainsaw felling at least 40 trees and dropping them into the Potomac to force the NPS to purchase his land while it was still under commercial zoning and thus more valuable. There was an immediate public outcry. A *Washington Post* editorial condemned the tree cutting as did many Moyaone residents.[12]

---

[9] Scott Childress, 344-345; "'A Disneyland-on-the Potomac' is Plan Near Mount Vernon," *Wilmington Delaware Evening Journal*, September 18, 1970, MVLA VR Burdick Overview File; Straus, 86; "The View from Mount Vernon," *The Washington Post*, March 16, 1970; Hunter, 44.
[10] MVLA Report of the Special lands Committee, October 1970, MVLA VR Burdick Overview File.
[11] Straus, 86; Hunter, 44-45; Scott-Childress, 345.
[12] Scott-Childress, 345; "'A Disneyland-on-the Potomac' is Plan Near Mount Vernon," *Wilmington Delaware Evening Journal*, September 18, 1970, MVLA VR Burdick Overview File; Straus, 86; Stanton interview.

The tree-cutting episode, Cecil Wall reported, had brought new attention to the fact that the scenic environment of Mount Vernon was "still in jeopardy" and that what Congress had "so prudently proposed ten years earlier" remained "critically incomplete." Though much had been accomplished largely through private initiative, he told MVLA members, there was "a belated realization that what we could have done so easily and at such a modest cost when the park was first authorized has now become costly and complicated."[13]

Wall explained that the NPS director had recommended to Congress that Goldstein be paid $1.5 million for a "so-called scenic easement," which would permit the current amusement park and allow multiple housing in multi-storied structures unlike the other scenic easements in the park that required five acre home sites. The NPS director had based his easement recommendation on the commercial rezoning of part of the Marshall Hall property.[14]

In the fall of 1971 Goldstein advertised a public auction for part of the Marshall Hall property surrounding the amusement park and other properties on both sides of Piscataway Creek that were not subject to the condemnation suit – approximately 260 acres or 77 percent of the Marshall Hall land in the scenic acquisition area. Both the MVLA and the Accokeek Foundation considered purchasing these lands, but the price was too high. The colorful auction took place on October 2, 1971, in a large boatshed in the Fort Washington Marina with roughly 100 people attending, to include NPS representatives. Goldstein was not satisfied with the results of the auction. Soon after, he approached Accokeek Foundation representatives and indicated that he wanted them to have the land and was willing to negotiate a price. At that point, Straus and Roy S. Thurman formed the Tricent Corporation to negotiate for the land after quietly agreeing with the NPS to sell the NPS the scenic easement rights at their appraised value after they had obtained the title.

The Tricent Corporation was able to privately negotiate a price of $520,000 for the purchase of the 260 acres of the Marshall Hall property. The NPS in turn paid $316,700 for the scenic easements. The condemnation suit was later settled out of court for $900,000. Enough money for this and what was thought to be the remainder of the acquisition program was authorized by P.L. 92-533, October 23, 1972.

[13] Charles C. Wall, MVLA, "Piscataway Park After Ten Years," 1971, MVLA Operation Overview.
[14] MVLA Director C.C.W. Memo to the Vice Regent for New York, March 29, 1971, MVLA Operation Overview.

The Department of the Interior thus obtained easements on much of the Marshall property's waterfront for $900,000, but Goldstein still owned the amusement park land and equipment.[15]

Goldstein's tactics angered many in Congress. In February 1973, Representative Saylor introduced H.R. 4861, "Piscataway Park—Preservation and Protection of Certain Lands," to acquire the remaining interest in the Marshall Hall lands. It provided for fee acquisition of roughly 446 acres of Marshall Hall land already under scenic easement control, another 171 acres outside the park boundary, and an 8-acre marina at Fort Washington on Piscataway Bay (also owned by Goldstein).[16]

Three days after introducing the bill, Saylor passed away. Representative Skubitz, who succeeded Saylor as ranking minority member of the national parks subcommittee, continued to push the bill through the House with a vote of 334 to 4. The bill included the Marshall Hall mansion, the amusement park, the parking lot, and the marina across Piscataway Bay at the eastern end of the park, all still owned by Goldstein.[17]

Interior officials opposed the bill. At hearings in the House subcommittee on national parks on October 16, 1973, they argued that the scenic easements were adequate to preserve the area as Congress had intended and that the cost of fee acquisition was not justified. Others testified that Congress never meant for this land to be purchased, that the area could hardly be seen from Mount Vernon, and that the amusement park served a good public purpose. Representative Skubitz countered the Interior Department's opposition with a powerful 30-page statement. The subcommittee and then the full committee ultimately overrode the department's objections and recommended passage of H.R. 4861. The full House passed H.R. 4861 in February 1974, despite the Interior Department's opposition.[18]

Park supporters now had to win over the Senate. In the spring and summer of 1974, the Citizens Committee on Natural Resources, Moyaone Association, Sierra Club, National Parks and Conservation Association, Alice Ferguson Foundation, MVLA, and the Accokeek Foundation joined forces in intense lobbying and a publicity campaign. Meanwhile, the Department of the Interior continued its opposition.

---

[15] Hunter, 45; Straus, 86-87, 89; MVLA, Report of the Special lands Committee, October 1971, MVLA VR Burbick Overview Files; Scott-Childress, 347-348.
[16] Hunter, 47; Hearings before a Subcommittee on the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House, "Department of the Interior and Related Agencies," Part 8, (Straus written statement) 95th Cong., 2nd sess., 101-102.
[17] Straus, 89-90; Hunter, 48; U.S. Senate, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, 93d Cong., 2d sess., H.R. 4861, "Piscataway Park—Preservation and Protection of Certain Lands," June 4, 1974, 14, www.babel.hathitrust.org.
[18] Hunter, 47-49; Hearings before a Subcommittee on the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House, "Department of the Interior and Related Agencies," Part 8, 101-102.

The Senate subcommittee on parks covered the same ground as in the House. Skubitz refuted the argument that Marshall Hall could not be seen from Mount Vernon by using a 1972 NPS report called "Potential Adverse Environmental Impact of Two Tracts of land Controlled by Joseph Goldstein Across from Mount Vernon." He also referenced Hartzog's earlier testimony to the same subcommittee on February 27 and 28, 1972, assuring Senator Bible that he hoped to get the Marshall Hall property in fee. At that time, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel Reed also said that it would be better to have the land in fee. The Senate passed the amended bill on August 1, 1974, directing the Secretary to acquire title within one year of the funds becoming available. The Senate bill went on to conference committee and ultimately passed.[19]

The final bill went to President Gerald Ford in early October 1974. The U.S. Constitution stipulates that a bill be signed or vetoed within ten legislative days, so the bill was due to expire at midnight on October 15. Both the Interior and Justice departments recommended that the president veto the bill, and it languished on his desk. Representative Skubitz, along with MVLA and various conservation groups launched a campaign to spark letter writing and newspaper editorials from around the country in favor of the bill. On October 15, 1974, with only hours left to avoid a pocket veto, President Ford signed P.L. 93-444 into law in a Rose Garden ceremony with Representative Skubitz and Accokeek Foundation representatives looking on.[20]

Thus, more than 13 years after the original legislation, the land acquisition to complete the park became law. The NPS quickly began removing the amusement park facilities and equipment and installing a wire fence around the mansion to protect it from vandalism.[21] It is worth noting that P.L. 93-444 was the first legislation related to the park with a statement directing the Secretary of the Interior to implement a development plan that would assure public access to and "public use and enjoyment of such lands."[22] On June 25, 1975, a Memorial Grove (known as Saylor Grove) was dedicated to the late Representative John P. Saylor for his important role in the park's creation. It remains a popular shoreline grove area for group and family picnics, fishing, scenic viewing, and birdwatching.

---

[19] Hunter 49-50.
[20] Scott-Childress, 348-349; Hunter, 50.
[21] Hearings before a Subcommittee on the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House, "Department of the Interior and Related Agencies," Part 8, 95th Cong., 2nd sess., 101-102; Straus, 98-99.
[22] Hunter, 52.

P.L. 93-444 thus added 625 acres to the park area, to include the Marshall Hall Amusement Park and adjacent Charles County lands, as well as the eight-acre Fort Washington Marina. Later legislation signed on October 21, 1976 (P.L. 95-578) provided for the operation of the Fort Washington Marina as a public facility.[23]

With P.L. 93-444 the NPS now had the authority to take immediate possession of the Marshall Hall Amusement Park property. A management agreement based on P.L. 93-444 allowed for the operation of the amusement park through December 31, 1979, by Star Enterprises, Inc., or its subsidiary, and provided for the orderly termination of amusement park operations until that time. The government paid $3.6 million for the property to Goldstein's Star Enterprises on June 16, 1975, and Goldstein turned over the management company that was running the site until 1980.[24]

When the NPS took control of Marshall Hall in 1975, the historic mansion stood empty except for occasional visits by NPS personnel. However, the mansion had great architectural significance. In 1976 officials listed Marshall Hall in the NRHP. In applying for this designation, the NPS noted that it was the largest house in Southern Maryland documented as dating before 1740. It was an excellent example of colonial architecture, and at the time it was remarkably intact. Contemporary records indicated that the Marshall Hall was the largest brick house standing in Charles County between 1710 and 1740. Despite extensive alterations, it retained a number of original features, many of which were the earliest examples recorded in Maryland, to include the four-room plan which became a standard favorite in the region and remained popular until the early 19th century, the one and one-half story construction and unusual framing of the roof, and the arched blind panels decorating the chimney stacks. The addition on the east end of the mansion was noteworthy for the original south doorway opening onto a recessed porch. In nominating the structure, the NPS noted that Marshall Hall was "invaluable for use in comparative studies tracing the architectural development of the region." Also important was the mansion's association with one of Southern Maryland's most socially prominent and affluent families – the Marshalls. Finally, the

[23] Susan Long, *Historic Structure Report Architectural Data Section for Marshall Hall Piscataway Park Marshall Hall* (NPS, January 1983), 14. The NPS would later conduct an environmental assessment to determine feasible alternatives for the future use of the Fort Washington Marina and assess their impact on the natural, cultural, and scenic resources of the area. See NPS Denver Service Center, *Environmental Assessment Piscataway Park Fort Washington Marina*, December 1979.

[24] "Statement for Management Piscataway Park," January 1992, 3, NACE file: Legislative History; Scott-Childress, 349-350.

private and public records related to the house were "remarkably complete, providing valuable insight into the life of a prosperous landowning family in 18th century Southern Maryland.[25]

Marshall Hall's National Register nomination documented other buildings and structures on the ten-acre site. It did not discuss remaining post-1940 amusement park structures including concession stands, a roller coaster, a ferris wheel, a bumper car ride, a fun house, several arcades, a restaurant, a twister, several ticket booths, a picnic pavilion, rest rooms, the pier, and the main office. All of these buildings and structures were slated for demolition in the next few years.[26]

In early 1981 the NPS proposed conducting architectural investigations at the Marshall Hall mansion in order to prepare a historic structure report for preservation of the property. Deputy Regional Director Robert G. (Bob) Stanton, who had been National Capital Parks – East (NACE) superintendent in the early 1970s, informed the Department of the Interior that to adequately describe the historic architectural features and investigate possible structural and moisture problems, the NPS needed to remove modern materials that had been added to the building, to include paneling, carpeting, and the acoustical tile dropped ceiling. These materials detracted from the building's integrity. The NPS had determined that the proposed work would have no effect on any characteristics that qualified the mansion and the park for the National Register. He asked the department to concur.[27]

In the spring of 1981, NPS began preliminary work in preparation for a historic structures report on the Marshall Hall mansion. When NPS personnel removed the mansion's 20th century interior, they uncovered significant historic fabric, some of which was believed to be original and intact. NPS staff compiled a comprehensive set of detailed field notes, measurements, and photographs, documenting the current condition of the building. To best describe the building and be most useful in comparative studies, they developed a historic structures report as a study guide to present the historic features and details in a visual format in progressive detail. The survey report included measured drawings of the building that had been completed by the Office of the Historic American Buildings Survey.[28]

---

[25] NPS, National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, Marshall Hall, May 12, 1976, 7, NACE files; Scott-Childress, 353; Long, "Historic Structures Report," 1983, v.
[26] NPS, National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form, Marshall Hall, May 12, 1976, 7, 8.
[27] Deputy Regional Director Robert Stanton to J. Rodney Little, Maryland SHPO, March 17, 1981, NPS PHP PISC.
[28] NPS, "Statement for Management of Piscataway Park," rev., 1992, NCP-E, file: Legislative History; Long, "Historic Structures Report," v.

The mansion remained vacant except for occasional unauthorized individuals seeking shelter. Unfortunately, only a few months after the NPS study, late at night on Friday October 16, 1981, someone set the house on fire either by accident or design. The fire roared through the historic home, leaving it badly damaged. It destroyed the entire roof and most of the interior finishes, leaving only the exterior brick walls. Though the NPS and some local agencies offered a $2,500 reward for information about the arson, no culprit was ever identified. The decrepit mansion would stand for two more decades. To minimize further deterioration and preserve the original fabric, the NPS shored, braced, and repointed the exterior brick. It also plastered the exterior walls to protect the soft brick from water damage.[29]

The mansion would experience additional damage on January 11, 2003, when a truck driver for WEL Companies crashed his 18-wheel tractor-trailer through the front and rear walls of the building's shell, creating two gaping holes and leaving the eastern and western portions of the house held together by only a single beam along the old roofline. The NPS later repaired the brick work, but the issue of whether to reconstruct the house was a difficult choice and no reconstruction was undertaken. The NPS currently maintains the site as an architectural ruin and will continue to maintain it in its current condition.[30]

Marshall Hall Amusement Park

Just as the period brought changes to the Marshall Hall mansion, there were changes related to the Marshall Hall Amusement Park as well. In 1977, a windstorm toppled the amusement park's main attraction, the roller coaster, and by that time many of the other rides were inoperable or unreliable and the number of visitors had dropped significantly. The NPS closed the amusement park for good in 1978.[31] In January 1981, the NPS informed J. Rodney Little of the Maryland State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), that as directed by P.L. 93-444 the NPS planned to remove the remaining structures of the defunct Marshall Hall Amusement Park, in accordance with original purpose of the park – to protect the Mount Vernon viewshed. Removing the amusement park would also help restore the original environment of Marshall Hall.

The remaining amusement park structures had fallen into disrepair, and the NPS determined they were without historical or architectural significance. The only structure potentially worth preservation was the empty carousel house, dating from 1906. Its roof and support members were largely intact and in fair

[29] NPS, "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form," draft, 2011, NCP-E file; Scott-Childress, 353-354; NPS, "Statement for Management of Piscataway Park," rev., 1992, NCP-E, file: Legislative history)
[30] Scott-Childress, 354-355; NPS, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form," draft, 2011.
[31] Scott-Childress, 350, 353.

condition. The NPS had written the National Carousel Association to identify any existing unhoused carousel that could use this structure, which the NPS would be willing to donate. The NPS concluded that removal of the amusement park remained "essential" to the purpose of Piscataway Park and would greatly enhance Marshall Hall.[32]

Buddy Bladen House

Other issues related to the Marshall Hall property cropped up in the 1980s. In August 1984 at the request of the NACE superintendent, park historian Marilyn W. Nickels convened a task force to consider options regarding the farmhouse located at Marshall Hall, which had been last occupied as park quarters by an NPS employee named Buddy Bladen. The task force consisted of regional historical architect Dr. Paul Goeldner, National Capital Region (NCR) regional historian Gary Scott, site manager Al Korzan, and chief of the facilities maintenance branch Kip Hagen. It met at the site on August 15, 1984, and after a brief survey of the building concluded that it should be thoroughly examined to determine its current condition and the extent of the repairs required to make it usable as a residence or an administrative office. Later Jack Longworth of Design Services, NCR, inspected the building. He reported that the cost of rehabilitating the structure was prohibitive and recommended that the building be removed as a health and safety hazard. Since the building was more than 50 years old, removal would require approval from NPS headquarters.[33]

In January 1986, NACE Superintendent Burnice (Bernie) T. Kearney informed the NCR director that the park had determined that the Bladen House was "no longer necessary to achieve our objectives at this site." Also, the park's General Management Plan (GMP) had recommended its removal. Therefore the superintendent asked for permission to "deactivate" the Buddy Bladen House as quarters and remove the building from the site. All agreed that the structure should be removed.[34]

In 1986 NCR officials asked NPS headquarters for permission to remove the Buddy Bladen House. Its deteriorating condition made it a health and safety hazard for visitors, and both the park's GMP and the site's Development Concept Plan (DCP) called for its removal. The NPS associate director of cultural

---

[32] Deputy NCR Regional Director Robert G. Stanton to J. Rodney Little, Maryland SHPO, January 30, 1981, NPS PHP PISC.
[33] Memo, NCP-E Historian Marilyn W. Nickels to Superintendent NCP-E, April 25, 1985, subj: Farmhouse at Marshall Hall, NPS PHP PISC.
[34] Memo, Bernie T. Kearney to Regional Director, NCR, January 6, 1986, subj: Quarters (Bladen House), NPS PHP PISC.

resources had asked the region to use the National Register criteria to assess the historic significance of the structure. Regional Director Bob Stanton ultimately concluded that the farmhouse did not qualify as significant under National Register criteria either as a structure in its own right or as a contributing structure to a larger theme. He reiterated his request for permission to remove the structure. NPS officials ultimately decided to remove the structure and arranged for the building to be razed as part of an approved fire training exercise.[35]

National Colonial Farm

In 1970s and 1980s, the NPS also faced a variety of issues related not only to the Marshall Hall property but also to National Colonial Farm, one of the few developed sites within the park boundaries. The original legislation establishing the park had laid out the basic purpose for National Colonial Farm, which included approximately 93 acres of cultivated farm and pasture land and 50 acres of natural forest and wildlife settings along the Maryland shore between the Prince George's County/Charles County boundary line and Bryan Point Road. National Colonial Farm supported a variety of habitats: fence row, mature forest growth, swamp, tidal marsh, and river shoreline. The farm's pond had made it a stopping point for migratory fowl, especially Canadian Geese and ducks. Archeological and historical research indicated that the original farm buildings and sites at the farm had been eroded and submerged by the Potomac River and these sites were now many yards offshore. Thus the intent of the farm was not to reconstruct it to the mid-1700s but to maintain and operate it as "representative of that time."[36]

The 1963 cooperative agreement between the NPS and the Accokeek Foundation had authorized the Accokeek Foundation to conduct various scientific and educational programs in the park to include "an historical restoration and demonstration of a working farm," and the NPS had contracted with the Accokeek Foundation to operate National Colonial Farm as it does to this day.[37]

---

[35] Memo, Regional Director Robert Stanton to Associate Director, Cultural Resources, WASO, July 31, 1986, NPS PHP PISC; Memo, Chief Historian Edwin C. Bearss to Chief of Historic Architecture, subj: Farmhouse, Marshall Hall, August 6, 1986, NPS PHP PISC; Memo, Chief Historian Edward Bearss to Chief of Historic Architecture Miller, July 10, 1986, subj: Removal of Derelict Farmhouse, Marshall Hall, Piscataway Park, NPS PHP PISC, Correspondence 1975 - present; email, Stephen Syphax to Janet McDonnell, October 15, 2017. *[Pictures of the Buddy Bladen house can be found in memo from Bearss to Chief of Historic Architecture Miller, July 10, 1986, NPS PHP PISC]*

[36] NPS, *Study/Action Plan National Colonial Farm,* prepared by Accokeek Foundation, NPS Contract, May 11, 1979, 32-33.

[37] Memo, NCR Associate Regional Director to NCR Regional Director, subj: Review of an environmental assessment of alternatives for a Development Concept Plan for National Colonial Farm," February 8, 1980, 1.

Study/Action Plan (1979)

By the late 1970s the NPS had concluded that it needed to develop alternative approaches to development at the National Colonial Farm site. NPS officials recognized that any changes in the programs and development of the farm could have an impact outside the site as well, so they needed to measure and evaluate these impacts on the rest of the park and on areas outside the park. With the entire park situated on the flood plain of a major navigable river, the NPS had to take into consideration the existing flood plain management legislation, applicable permits, and coordination with certain local and federal agencies in its planning. It also had to ensure that the planning complied with applicable handicap access legislation.[38]

In 1979 the Accokeek Foundation conducted a survey and prepared a report, a Study/Action Plan, for National Colonial Farm under a contract with the NPS. The purpose of the 1979 Study/Action Plan was to develop a 5 to 20-year plan for the farm. The plan laid out some alternatives for development and included a summary description of the relationships between the NPS and the Accokeek Foundation concerning the farm's management. It also outlined the historical development of the Bryan Point area and the subsequent establishment and operation of the farm.[39]

The original Accokeek Foundation charter had stated that the Foundation would execute its mandate of preserving the Piscataway area in consultation and cooperation with public and private bodies such as the Smithsonian Institution, the NPS, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Alice Ferguson Foundation, and the Moyaone Association as provided by the 1963 cooperative agreement, by 1968 the Accokeek Foundation and roughly 200 landowners had donated land, and the Accokeek Foundation operated the National Colonial Farm. The specific area that the farm would use was further defined in additions to that original cooperative use agreement.

Historically, the Foundation had received some security and maintenance support from the NPS for the farm. It expected to continue providing private funds for the research operations, with the federal government contributing funds for full operation and development of the farm. After intense negotiation, the NPS and the Accokeek Foundation produced an agreement letter on December 29, 1978, to cover the

[38] NCP-E, Fact Sheet: National Colonial Farm, May 1979, Holliday Wagner Files.
[39] NPS, *Study/Action Plan National Colonial Farm,* Accokeek Foundation, May 11, 1979, 1, Holliday Wagner files; see also eTIC file PISC_838_D11_[id10669].

first 40 days of a longer contract for planning and for an interpretive program at National Colonial Farm. The two parties signed the contract on March 29, 1979.[40]

The final Study/Action Plan reiterated that the farm was to be operated for research, educational, and scenic purposes as a public facility with the goals of preserving colonial culture and serving as an agricultural historic living museum for present and future generations. It then laid out the farm's goals and objectives for the next 1, 5, and 20 years in the following areas: management and operations; construction, interpretive/educational; and environmental.[41]

The plan went on to discuss land classification at National Colonial Farm. Since Congress had created Piscataway Park to preserve the historic viewshed, the NPS managed the farm as a historic landscape, allowing for continued maintenance of areas that were already developed. It would not permit active recreational activities or additional developments that would adversely impact the farm's natural and historic features. The report then noted the constraints on management. For example, the park's 1961 enabling legislation authorized the Secretary of the Interior to accept donations of lands and interests therein from the Accokeek Foundation and allowed these lands to be leased so long as they were maintained in accordance with the legislative mandate.

Subsequent legislation provided federal funds for operating the farm and the construction and maintenance of the facilities there. The Accokeek Foundation board in turn pledged to continue its funding for research projects and operations. The existing scenic easement restrictions were, the survey report conceded, "a major influence" on the way the farm was managed. The farm's charter gave the Accokeek Foundation the authority to impose a visitor's fee that it used to defray the operating costs. Although such fees were no longer required for operational funds, they continued to provide a way to regulate public use of the farm property. The board was willing to consider an NPS request to eliminate those fees as long as a park ranger was stationed at a spot immediately adjacent to the farm.[42]

The Study/Action Plan addressed some of the farm's management problems. First, there was no publicly approved plan for developing the farm, to include constructing buildings and other facilities. This made implementing the management goals and policies more difficult. Second, the site had a parking shortage. The parking lot immediately outside the farm entrance only accommodated 20 cars, and the rest parked

---

[40] *Study/Action Plan National Colonial Farm*, May 11, 1979, 5, 24; Hunter, 55.
[41] Ibid., 25-30.
[42] ibid., 33-34.

along roadways, in fields, and on National Colonial Farm lands. Third was the challenge of visitor orientation. Without a contact center, visitors had no place at the entrance where they could receive information orienting them to the farm. Fourth, the insurance carrier had declared the steps down to the riverine area, which provided the best view of Mount Vernon, to be unsafe and the area had been closed to visitors. Finally, the site had only two portable toilets and no water fountains. "The authentic character of the farm has not been achieved," the report concluded. Some buildings had post-18th century features and others (such as portable toilets) would not have been found in 1750.[43]

The Study/Action Plan outlined two alternatives. Both alternatives complied with the legislative and public mandate of preserving the view from Mount Vernon and maintaining the open and wooded aspects of a colonial farm similar to one existing in George Washington's era. Alternative 1, which was basically to take no action, barely met these requirements mainly because of the lack of public or private funds to restore and maintain the farm. "If restoration and construction money is not made available," the report explained, "it will not continue to meet the legislative and public mandate." Alternative 2 provided for removing three buildings, renovating nine of the existing buildings, and constructing ten new facilities. It emphasized improving the quality of the visitor experiences; increasing the number of school tours and special events; improving the farm's appearance and the view from Mount Vernon; increasing the demonstration area; removing some buildings, restoring the remaining buildings, and adding appropriate colonial-style buildings, trails, fence and plantings; research and development of one or two new access routes into the farm (e.g. Potomac River access; new road from Wharf Road to the farm; and a trail from Marshall Hall).[44]

The environmental impact of Alternative 1 would be continued erosion of the Potomac shores and less usable land and wildlife habitat. Access to the rapidly deteriorating dock would present a safety hazard for visitors and have to be curtailed. With the lack of proper farming sheds and maintenance facilities, modern cultivation tools would continue to be scattered around the farm and visible to visitors. There would be no universally accessible facilities. Users of Saylor's Grove would continue to compete with National Colonial Farm visitors for parking spaces. Visitor "conveniences" would continue to deteriorate, especially as their numbers grew. Increased congestion in some areas would diminish the visitor experience and create hazards. The visual intrusion from modern buildings and facilities was out of character with the farm, and maintenance facilities would continue to deteriorate. In addition to

[43] Ibid., 36-38.
[44] Ibid., 45.

removing, renovating, or constructing facilities, Alternative 2 provided for constructing and expanding parking lots, roads, trails, and rail fencing.[45]

As for the environmental impact, the study concluded that improving basic visitor conveniences would have minimal impact on the present use of the land, affecting only 6.5 percent of the total land area. The farm would be developing two acres of woodland, three acres of farmland, and five acres of grassland. It would have a positive impact on the aesthetic appearance of the farm and the changes would fit into the required colonial period. Other visual intrusion out of character with the park would be removed or relocated. Alternative 2 would improve visitor safety with the redesign of the parking and entrance facilities and enhance the visitor experience by providing a visitor contact station and adding new exhibits. Visitor congestion would diminish, and the local economy would benefit.

The negative environmental impacts included construction-related short-term air, noise, and water pollution. Expanding the parking lot would create additional run-off into the Potomac River causing some pollution. Though measures could be taken to mitigate some of the negative impacts, the earthen work construction would increase runoff and create a short-term pollution problem. The construction would also cause a temporary decrease in air quality and increase the noise level and reduce wildlife habitat by several acres. However, improving the facilities would stimulate research.[46]

Some NPS officials expressed concern about some of the changes that the Accokeek Foundation laid out in its Study/Action Plan. NCR regional historian Barry Mackintosh noted that the farm area did not include any historic buildings. The plan provided for removing some of the existing "new/old" buildings as he called them would be a house, barns, and other outbuildings, and an "Alexander Hamilton Store," which the Foundation claimed represented the one that the early resident/merchant Hamilton actually operated in the Piscataway area, where the farm could sell products and food it produced along with souvenirs, refreshments, and "other memorabilia." Mackintosh objected to this, pointing out that Hamilton was not born until 1757 and never lived in the area, so he could not have operated a store there in the 1750s.[47]

Though the Study/Action Plan indicated that the overall impact of this development would be positive "because the goal is to reestablish and inhabit the farm as it has been for at least two millenia (sic),"

---

[45] Ibid., 57-60.
[46] Ibid., 82-84.
[47] Memo, NCR Regional Historian Barry Mackintosh to Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, subj: National Colonial Farm, Piscataway Park, May 22, 1979, NPS PHP PISC.

Mackintosh called this "fallacious reasoning, historically as well as environmentally." The plan itself conceded that there would be "a minimal adverse impact" on the site's cultural resources since some of the development would occur in the approximate locations of known archeological sites. Mackintosh pointed out that the construction of a parking lot would destroy at least one site. While the proposed development might be appropriate at major amusement parks, he added, it was "wholly foreign" to the NPS mission. While NPS management policies did allow for reconstructing vanished historic structures under very limited specified conditions, he conceded, they were "unequivocal" in prohibiting the kind of development the plan proposed. The proposed development ran counter to NPS policy for design quality.[48]

Mackintosh noted that P.L. 87-362 had specified that the park existed "to preserve…the historic and scenic value, the unusual cultural, scientific, and recreational values." It included no mandate to develop, create, build, enhance, or do anything more than simply maintain the natural scene as viewed from across the river. He strongly recommended that the NPS oppose the development proposal. Beyond the serious problems inherent in the plan, he concluded, "the issue goes to the heart of what we as an agency are all about."[49]

Environmental Assessment for a Development Concept Plan for National Colonial Farm (1980)

Issues related to National Colonial Farm continued to surface and the NPS conducted an environmental assessment to better understand the potential impacts from implementing a Development Concept Plan for the farm. After the completion of the Study/Action Plan, in January 1980, the NCR director expressed concerns about the proposed development at the farm. At the time neither the park nor the farm had an approved general management plan. However, an agreement had been reached with the NPS planning office to prepare a Development Concept Plan that would serve as its general management plan. Therefore the document should go through the prescribed general management plan process and be reviewed in NPS headquarters for policy considerations, and that review had not yet taken place.

The regional director also raised concerns about the proposal to replicate farm buildings of the colonial era. "That is in direct contravention of Nation Park Service policy," he wrote, and would require a policy variation, which he currently opposed. He expressed concerns about the legality of funneling money to the Accokeek Foundation for operating the farm and constructing buildings there. He recommended that

[48] Memo, Mackintosh to Associate Regional Director, Professional Services, May 22, 1979.
[49] Ibid.

the solicitors review the legal aspects of this arrangement before making any commitments. He explained that the NPS did not oppose the colonial farm and believed it could be a useful endeavor and an educational experience for visitors. The farm buildings should not be "'phony colonial'," he said, but rather a more modern design that evoked the colonial spirit. He also hoped that the farm would use only plants of the time period, not present-day hybrids.[50]

The park's operations had previously been based upon an approved statement for management, dated 1977, and a 1969 master plan report on the park. The task of the proposed Development Concept Plan for National Colonial Farm was to consolidate the various facets of the park's management needs in the farm area into a functional management document. In anticipation of producing such a plan, NPS officials held a public workshop on May 17, 1979, to better identify various park needs, deficiencies, and issues related to further development of the park and surrounding community. Based on existing data and public comment, the NPS then developed various alternative plans for addressing the site's problems in the "Assessment of Alternatives for a Development Concept Plan (DCP) for National Colonial Farm." A public hearing took place on October 3, 1979, giving interested parties the opportunity to review the plan and provide written comment.

The associate regional director explained that the NPS had formulated the DCP as the "most balanced solution to National Colonial Farm's many-faceted needs." Ultimately, the NPS found that none of the alternatives presented in this assessment completely satisfied the combined needs of NPS management, the site's interpretive/educational program, and the surrounding community. Therefore, it combined parts of two alternatives to produce the most acceptable plan.[51]

On February 21, 1980, Bob Stanton, now acting NCR regional director, informed the Maryland SHPO, Rodney Little, that the NPS proposed to assist the Accokeek Foundation in developing National Colonial Farm, attaching a copy of "Review of an Environmental Assessment of Alternatives for a Development Concept Plan for National Colonial Farm." Stanton assured Little that the NPS would make the "maximum effort" to obscure all buildings and farm landscape features from view through plant screening and

---

[50] Memo, NCR, Regional Director to Associate Director, Management and Operations, subj. Colonial Farm at Piscataway, January 22, 1980, NPS PHP PISC.

[51] Memo, NCR Associate Regional Director to NCR Regional Director, subj: Review of an environmental assessment of alternatives for a Development Concept Plan for National Colonial Farm," February 8, 1980, 1-2. NPS PHP PISC. See enclosed maps entitled "Development Concept Plan" and "Farm Demonstration Area." Also attached is a synopsis of the comments received and the NPS responses – see Enclosure A. See pages 3-12 for more detail. Regional Director Manus (Jack) Fish signature is at the end of this 12-page memo.

building location, and little or no development would be visible from across the river. Before approving further development, he explained, the NPS would conduct both site specific and area wide studies to define the archeological significance of the area and determine the appropriate management strategies to avoid or mitigate any adverse impact. It would conduct archeological monitoring during any ground-disturbing activity that might affect cultural resources. The NPS had determined that the proposed development would have no adverse impact on the characteristics that qualified the park for the National Register, and Stanton sought Little's concurrence.[52]

In early May 1980 the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation informed the NPS that it would hold off considering the NPS's determination regarding the development of National Colonial Farm until the NPS undertook an intensive archeological survey of the area proposed for development. The Council agreed that the NPS should first conduct archeological investigations of the specific sites affected by these plans and submit the results to the Maryland SHPO for review and permission to proceed if appropriate. Thus the NPS arranged for studies of the proposed tobacco barn, visitor contact center, and drinking well construction sites. It provided reports on those investigations, which indicated that constructing the tobacco barn and drilling the well would have no significant impact on the cultural resources. As for the proposed visitor center, the report concluded that although the site included some cultural resources, they were not important enough to justify abandoning NPS construction plans.[53]

In August 1980 NCR Regional Director Manus J. "Jack" Fish reported to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation that the NPS had determined that constructing the proposed visitor contact center, drilling for a drinking well, and erecting a tobacco barn at National Colonial Farm would have no adverse effect on the park. Soon after, Jordan E. Tannenbaum from the Advisory Council reemphasized the Council's earlier request for completing an archeological survey before any further development at the farm. However, he also indicated that there appeared to be some urgency in resolving questions surrounding initial development actions at the farm.

The Council accepted Fish's determination that erecting the tobacco farm or drilling the drinking well would have no adverse effects, but it disagreed about the construction of a visitor contact center. The

---

[52] Acting Regional Director Robert G. Stanton to Maryland State Historic Preservation Officer J. Rodney Little, February 21, 1980, NPS PHP PISC.

[53] NCR Acting Regional Director Parker T. Hill to J. Rodney Little, State Historic Preservation Officer, Maryland Historical Trust, August 4, 1980, NPS PHP PISC. [Hill sent a similar letter to Robert R. Garvey, Jr., Executive Director, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, August 5, 1980, NPS PHP PISC]

Council believed the visitor center could be moved slightly to the southeast along Bryan Point Road to avoid the identified archeological site. This would not be contrary to the general DCP for the farm. Yet, the Council agreed to remove this objections if the NPS met three specific conditions: (1) NPS would examine the feasibility of moving the visitor contact center to the south side of the existing parking lot loop access road, avoiding the archeological site; (2) if the archeological site could not be avoided, the NPS would develop and implement a data recovery program in consultation with the Maryland SHPO; and (3) the NPS would complete the archeological survey work before undertaking any additional construction related development at the farm and the identification of archeological resources. Regional Director Jack Fish indicated his concurrence with these terms.[54]

The National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) also reviewed the proposed development plan for the farm. After studying the plan and visiting the site with NPS personnel, the NPCA wrote that it supported the idea of a working historic farm across from Mount Vernon "insofar as it is feasible." However, it recommended that the NPS draw boundaries around such an area to separate the farm from the large tract of park land and scenic easement land that could be used for nature trails, bridle paths, and other visitor activities, as the NPS had indicated in its development plan.[55]

While the NPCA agreed with the need for a visitor facility, it urged the NPS to reexamine the proposed location for the center. It argued that a modern utilitarian structure at the site proposed would detract from a visitor's first impression of the farm site and their view of the river and Mount Vernon. The NPCA supported the general NPS policies against reconstruction of historic buildings, but it also understood that NPS officials had made an exception at National Colonial Farm to honor a long-standing commitment made in the 1963 cooperative agreement. The farm was designed to demonstrate an 18th century working farm with livestock, but it appeared to lack the necessary demonstration farm buildings such as the tobacco barn located out in the field demonstrating the harvesting and curing of tobacco. The same applied to the livestock building, though the NPCA agreed that all buildings not of the period should be screened from the river to preserve the historic landscape. The NPCA concurred with the proposed development plan as related to the archeological sites in the area. "The tangible evidence of the early Indian inhabitants gives the NPS the opportunity to present the history of the Potomac Valley in a dramatic setting along the banks of the Potomac River," it noted. "Every effort should be made to protect

[54] Jordan E. Tannenbaum to Jack Fish, September 12, 1980, NCP-E files: National Colonial Farm,
[55] Helen B. Byrd, Special Assistant to the President, NPCA, "Comment on Environmental Assessment of Alternatives for a Development Concept for Colonial Farm," 1980, NPS PHP PISC,

this irreplaceable resource." In conclusion, NPCA commended the NPS for its conceptual plan for the National Colonial Farm.[56]

National Colonial Farm/Grant to Accokeek Foundation (1983)

In 1980 Congress passed legislation (P.L. 96-344, September 8, 1980) that authorized the Secretary of the Interior to cooperate with the Accokeek Foundation in the operations and maintenance of National Colonial Farm. It authorized the Secretary to make funds available to the Accokeek Foundation for this purpose.[57] As the DCP for National Colonial Farm moved forward, the NPS granted the Accokeek Foundation $300,000 for Fiscal Year 1983 to operate the National Colonial Farm. This grant provided a continuation of the cooperative efforts between the NPS and the Accokeek Foundation, extending back over a quarter century. It also allowed the farm to improve its setting to more accurately portray the 18th century and to handle visitors more efficiently. Farm officials submitted their report on this grant to the NPS in December 1983. In reporting on this grant, the NPS acknowledged the "unique" relationship between the NPS and the Accokeek Foundation. Though this relationship benefited both parties, the farm was the chief beneficiary. The report credited NACE and NCR staff for their efforts to "make the grant work." "As a cooperative venture," it added, "the NPS and the Accokeek Foundation have demonstrated that the Federal government and the private sector can work together for the public good."[58]

The report went on to list the Foundation's accomplishments under the grant. The farm was conducting an interpretive program focused on the agricultural activities of a middle-class 18th century planter and his family that included site tours led by costumed guides and was conducting specialized demonstrations related to agriculture and colonial life. The grant enabled the park to serve a growing number of visitors, from 16,718 in Fiscal Year 1982 to 17,462 in Fiscal Year 1983, a 4 percent increase. Demonstration farming was another activity, and the farm had improved crop varieties and livestock "breeds." It had increased the number of heirloom crops, such as Red May wheat and sold produce from the demonstration area to the public. The report noted that the Accokeek Foundation was conducting other farming activities under special use permits to maintain the open and wild aspects of the park. Much of

[56] Helen B. Byrd, Special Assistant to the President, NPCA, "Comment on Environmental Assessment of Alternatives for a Development Concept for Colonial Farm," 1980, NPS PHP PISC.
[57] "An Act to improve the Administration of Historic Sites, Buildings and Antiquities Act of 1935," P.L. 96-344, September 8, 1980.
[58] "The Report of the Grant to The Accokeek Foundation, Inc., by the NPS for the Operation and Maintenance of the National Colonial Farm, Piscataway Park, Maryland, FY-83," 1-14, NCP-E files, National Colonial Farm.

the produce from these activities was used to feed livestock on the farm. In addition, the Foundation rented several garden plots to private individuals with the rent fees going back into the program.

The farm staff continued to improve the farm's physical plant in accordance with the DCP. The Foundation completed a number of construction projects from the previous fiscal year, such as the Tobacco barn, and replaced the fence around the kitchen garden. The farm staff assisted the NPS in completing work on a new water system, main gate, vehicle turn around, and visitor parking. They planted 2,000 Autumn Olive trees along the riverbank to help stabilize the bank and slow down erosion. Meanwhile, the Foundation continued to improve its administrative procedures carefully monitoring the care of NPS property at the farm.

In addition, the Accokeek Foundation used the farm site for research projects that benefited the preservation, operation, and interpretation of the site. The agricultural history research program provided scholarly information about 18th century agricultural techniques and crops. Under the historic crop and livestock program, the farm identified and raised period-appropriate crop and livestock varieties. The farm distributed its research reports to other living historical farm museums and to scholars.[59]

National Colonial Farm/Laurel Branch Reconstruction

Another issue related to National Colonial Farm was the proposed relocation and reconstruction of a historic farmhouse at the site. This would enable farm staff to present and interpret the life and agricultural practices of a middle-class Southern Maryland farmer during the colonial period. After a three-year search, National Colonial Farm officials had located an 18th century farmhouse in Laurel Branch in Charles County, Maryland and proposed to take down that house and reconstruct it on the colonial farm site. This one-story frame structure with a dormered gable roof dated from the late 18th century with an addition from the early 19th century. In December 1985, NCR Acting Regional Director John Parsons asked the Maryland Historical Trust to agree that as the house stood on its original site the building was eligible for listing in the National Register as a locally significant example of early Southern Maryland vernacular architecture. The NPS also proposed that there be a memorandum of agreement with the Trust, as required by Section 106 of the NHPA to resolve any adverse effects to historic properties, concurred in by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which would fulfill the Section

[59] Ibid.

106 requirements regarding the dismantling, removal, and reconstruction of the farmhouse. Parsons listed eight detailed stipulations related to dismantling, moving, and reconstructing the building. [60]

On December 17, 1986, Superintendent Kearney and NACE historian Marilyn Nickels, along with NCR and NPS headquarters cultural resource professionals, and Dr. David O. Percy of the National Colonial Farm, met with Maryland Historical Trust representatives. The meeting was to address a problem identified by the Trust through the failure of the farm to comply with Section 106. The issue was the National Colonial Farm plan to relocate a house potentially eligible for listing in the National Register from Charles County, Maryland, to their Accokeek site. They ultimately drafted a memorandum of agreement to address the Trust's Section 106 concerns. Acting NPS Director Denis Galvin determined that the Trust's request for the archeological and architectural documentation of a historic property was reasonable. He called it "a positive action that all prudent managers should undertake whenever they prepare to relocate a structure either in or eligible for listing on the National Register." He directed NPS managers to ensure that the NPS met these responsibilities in its planning process and that cooperating associations such as the National Colonial Farm also met those standards.[61]

After six months of dismantling the structure, by October 1987, the Accokeek Foundation was ready to begin putting it together on site. The farmhouse had been vacant for 20 years, and roughly 60 percent of the original building materials had been lost or damaged beyond repair.[62]

When Robert Straus asked architectural historian J. Richard Rivoire for his opinion on the value of Laurel Branch as a historic structure when reconstructed at the farm, he responded that the building's "substantial lack of historic integrity" kept it from consideration as a significant example of regional vernacular architecture following reconstruction. The only part of the house of interest to historians was the original clapboard sheathing of the attic chambers and the accompanying documentation prepared before the building was dismantled and removed from its original site. When reconstructed, Laurel Branch retained less than 30 percent of its original framing and was a largely reconstructed house that could not be accurately termed "historic" or even "restored."[63]

---

[60] Dave Goska, "Historic farm gets 1700s farmhouse," The Journal, October 9, 1987, NCP-E files; Acting Regional Director, NCR, John Parsons, to J. Rodney Little, Maryland Historical Trust, December 29, 1985, NPS PHP FILE: PISC.
[61] Memo, Acting Director Denis P. Galvin to Regional Director, NCR, January 13, 1987, subj: Section 106 and the Olive Hill Farm Property, PISC, NPS PHP PISC.
[62] Dave Goska, "Historic farm gets 1700s farmhouse," *The Journal*, October 9, 1987, NCP-E files.
[63] J. Richard Rivoire to Robert Ware Straus, February 11, 1989, NCP-E files, National Colonial Farm.

Park Management, Operations, and Interpretation

General Management Plan (GMP)/Environmental Assessment, 1983

As a first step in developing a GMP for the park, in early 1982 NPS staff began evaluating relevant resource information, identifying major planning concerns, and contacting various interested parties. In spring 1983 the NPS released a draft of the proposed General Management Plan (GMP)/Environmental Assessment (EA) for public review that laid out various alternatives, including a proposed plan for managing the park, and assessed the environmental impact of the proposed action.[64] Through a series of public meetings and workshops and agency discussions, park managers and the planning team identified and recorded a number of concerns. The NPS and the Accokeek Foundation struggled to come to agreement in developing this first GMP in part because the Foundation did not believe it reflected their vision of what they wanted to see on the ground in the park. Straus proved to be a forceful figure in the negotiation process.[65]

The NPS held a public hearing on the draft GMP on the evening of April 21, 1983, in the Knights of Columbus Hall in Accokeek, Maryland. Superintendent Kearney introduced the meeting during which approximately 90 citizens, mostly local residents, gave testimony. He emphasized that the plan would not address properties and issues within the scenic easement area. Nor would it include detailed information regarding the National Colonial Farm because the farm now had its own separate DCP and after that development plan was complete it would become part of the park's overall general management plan. Kearney explained that the GMP would guide park managers for the next 15 to 20 years. Rather than focus on specifics, it provided a broad framework for developing an interpretive concept for Piscataway Park. Some park areas were currently being interpreted by the private sector and the NPS wanted to develop a general interpretive plan.[66]

The testimony at the sometimes tense public hearing revealed the broad range of public concerns and perspectives related to the park's management. Billy Tayac, who introduced himself as the hereditary chief of the Piscataway Indians, emphasized the need to shift the focus from American Indian archeological remains to the present. Referring to Piscataway's access to the park, he asked, "What about

---

[64] NPS, *General Management Plan*, Piscataway Park, September 1983, 1, 3, PISC_838_D2008A.
[65] Comments by Stephen Potter, May 11, 2016.
[66] DOI, "Transcript, Public Hearing on the General Management Plan for Piscataway Park," April 21, 1983, 3, 4, 10, 11, Holliday Wagner files.

the present day Indian people? We are not going to be denied no matter what happens."[67] Charles Wagner, who had played such a key role in establishing the park, testified that he opposed any transfer of federally owned land in the park to include the marina, which had become "an unfortunate political football." He pointed out that the Piscataway River was so shallow that use of the marina would be "highly impractical." Wagner opposed the idea of dredging the river for the marina and dumping the spoil elsewhere. He argued that any changes in the marina should be in accord with the historic aspects of Piscataway Bay under the control of the National Park Service and that giving the marina to the state would be a "disaster."[68]

Belva Jensen, another key figure in the creation of the park and a Moyaone Reserve resident for decades, generally supported the draft plan but expressed "extreme concern" that the NPS would even consider the possibility of constructing a parking lot to provide access to the park anywhere along Bryan Point Road for any reason. She noted that she and others had worked very hard with the Interior Department, and the park existed mainly because of the donation of scenic easements to protect both the park and the lands within the easement area. She added that the NPS had repeatedly told them that this would be a low use park with access only at Marshall Hall at one end and Wharf Road at the other. It had assured them that it would make no change along Bryan Point Road and do nothing along this road to allow access to the park other than those existing at the time. If the NPS built the proposed parking lot to allow additional entrance to the park, she added, it would "break faith" with the landowners who had willingly given up their development rights. This would represent a breach of contract and thus render the scenic easement contracts "null and void."[69]

After the public hearing, Deputy Regional Director Stanton sent the draft GMP and EA to Maryland SHPO Little for review and for purposes of the NPS's programmatic memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Under the terms of the agreement, the NPS had consulted with Little in developing that draft. Stanton then indicated that he hoped the current draft adequately addressed the concerns that Little had expressed in his letters between March 1982 and May 1983 about maintaining the historic vista. He asked Little to sign it so that the NPS could send it on to the Advisory

[67] Ibid., 26.
[68] Ibid., 44-46.
[69] Ibid., 63-65.

Council in compliance with the Programmatic MOA. [70] A MOA is required when there are adverse effects to a property listed on the NRHP or eligible for listing. The agreement signed by relevant stakeholders is designed to minimize, mitigate, and otherwise resolve adverse impacts.

Don Klima from the Advisory Council also reviewed the plan and had no objection to implementing the preferred alternative as proposed, provided that in implementing the GMP the NPS took into account the conclusions and recommendations that had come out of the Accokeek Creek site conference of June 2, 1983, and any subsequent studies resulting from the conference. If Stanton signed and returned Klima's letter indicating his agreement to this condition, this would complete compliance with Section 106 and the Programmatic MOA. [71] The draft GMP also had the support of the Moyaone Association, the Accokeek Foundation, and the MVLA.[72]

Attorneys for the Alice Ferguson Foundation submitted comments on the draft GMP and environmental assessment, focusing specifically on legal issues related to the use of the park for religious purposes. They noted that a group calling itself the Piscataway Indian Nation, led by Billy Tayac ("The Tayac Group") criticized the draft GMP on the grounds that the park service's operation of the park was infringing on its first amendment rights. The group particularly objected to the continuation of the 1963 cooperative agreement between the NPS and the Alice Ferguson Foundation, which allowed the Alice Ferguson Foundation limited use of the land for its educational programs.[73]

The Alice Ferguson Foundation's lawyers contended that the Tayac Group's objections to the draft GMP had no basis in First Amendment law. The courts in fact had almost unanimously rejected similar claims and held that the First Amendment granted no special rights of access to public parks for the practice of religious ceremonies. They also had held that to limit park use by others in order to ensure privacy of American Indians wanting to practice their religion would violate the Establishment clause of the First Amendment. The Foundation's use of a small portion of the park for its educational program did not

---

[70] Deputy Regional Director, NCR, to J. Rodney Little, July 1, 1983, NPS PHP PISC. A MOA is required when there are adverse effects to a property listed on the NRHP or eligible for listing. The agreement signed by relevant stakeholders is designed to minimize, mitigate, and otherwise resolve adverse impacts.
[71] Don L. Klima, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, to Robert Stanton, August 15, 1983, NPS PHP PISC.
[72] Joseph De Stefanis, President Moyaone Association, to Supt. Burnice T. Kearney, June 3, 1983, NACE files; John A Castellani, MVLA, to Jack Fish, RD NCR, June 3, 1983, NACE files.
[73] Carolyn E. Agger and James X. Dempsey, Attorneys for Alice Ferguson Foundation, Inc., to Jack Fish, June 6, 1983, NCP-E file: PISC GMP.

infringe on the Tayac Group's religious rights. The limits on the group's use of the park for religious purposes were the same limitations on use of the park by the general public.[74]

The final approved *General Management Plan for Piscataway Park* (September 1983) called the park a "prime example" of government working with private organizations and individuals toward a common goal. At the time the plan was developed the total acreage within the authorized park boundary was 4,251 acres. One-third of this (1,465 acres) was owned in fee by the NPS and two-thirds (2,786 acres) were private residential lands under scenic easement agreement. The park provided valuable open space for Washington's expanding residential population. Use of the park remained low. Most visitors were residents of the area who came to fish, picnic, or visit National Colonial Farm or Hard Bargain Farm. The NPS had established management objectives, gathered baseline information, initiated a survey of historic archeological resources, instituted programs for managing the park's natural and cultural resources, and maintained facilities and services for visitors. The GMP would help ensure that future use and development of the park was "in keeping with Piscataway's preservation goals."[75]

The plan proposed a modest upgrade and development of existing use areas inside the park – at Wharf Road, National Colonial Farm, and Marshall Hall – and providing pedestrian access to allow the exploration and interpretation of important cultural and natural features. All this would be within the original mandate to preserve the view from Mount Vernon. The services and developments outlined were designed to enhance the current activities within the park rather than greatly expand recreational use. The plan's primary intent was "to manage a portion of the rapidly diminishing open space in the Washington metropolitan area so that its resource values will continue to be protected in the future."[76]

The plan reinforced the original objectives established for managing the park: preserve the view from the Mount Vernon estate and Fort Washington; preserve the park's historic and cultural values; preserve the park's archeological values; preserve and protect the park's ecological resources; provide parkland and open space where visitors could enjoy the park's natural beauty; and provide for public use and access. Regarding the historic scene referenced in the 1961 legislation, during the planning, officials determined that the existing field and forest pattern approximated the historic landscape. They also noted that much

---

[74] Ibid.
[75] NPS, *General Management Plan*, Piscataway Park, September 1983, 1, 3, eTIC file PISC_838_D2008A. The NPS consolidated the data it gathered in developing this plan into a separate volume entitled, *Information Base, Piscataway Park.*
[76] NPS, *General Management Plan*, Piscataway Park, September 1983, 1-2.

of the federally owned open land within the park was dedicated to agricultural use under special use permits and National Colonial Farm and Hard Bargain Farm were being operated by private foundations through cooperative agreements. The planners took this into account in planning for the preservation and use of the other park lands.

In undertaking the planning related to resource management, NPS planners concluded that the park's rich archeological resources had not yet been thoroughly studied and that those archeological sites needed to be protected until the NPS could determine their contents and significance. As for the park's historic resources, the Marshall Hall estate had been afforded protection by listing it in the NRHP, though much of historic fabric of the mansion had been recently destroyed by arson. The rest of the property needed to be protected from further damage or deterioration. The planning also identified several problems related to natural resources, such as illegal hunting and trapping in the park. The gypsy moth was threatening the trees, and the shoreline was eroding. Roughly half of the fee lands were within a floodplain and contained wetlands and other areas that were environmentally unsuited for intensive use or development. The plan included methods for minimizing natural resource damage.[77]

Planners also found problems with visitor access and circulation within the park. Three roads led from Indian Head Highway into three separate areas of the park, but two of these were narrow residential roads. Increased traffic on those two roads would disturb the rural-residential character of the park. The third, Marshall Hall Road, was the only access road with the potential to handle more traffic. Cars had no way to circulate within the park and current landownership patterns, archeological resources, and environmental constraints made constructing new roads unfeasible. The plan did not address this or the limited availability of foot and horse trail linkages. The plan also incorporated a variety of visitor services to ensure that the park provided adequate information and interpretation for visitors. Finally, the planners noted that the NPS needed to establish additional visitor activities that were compatible with the legislative intent and the park environment. With the appropriate support facilities, it could enhance current uses, such as picnicking, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, nature study and educational programs.[78]

The park's primary management objective was to preserve the viewshed, but as noted in the 1973 congressional hearing related to the Marshall Hall addition this objective was not to be interpreted so

[77] Ibid., 6-8.
[78] Ibid., 8-9.

narrowly as to preclude "the reasonable installation of public use facilities such as modest picnic areas, trails, and the like." Nor did it mean that the park did not contain other significant features than its scenery. The GMP noted, "The park's historic and archeological resources alone make it an important area worthy of protection."[79]

The GMP recommended actions that were essentially a continuation of existing trends at the park. Since its creation, the NPS had managed the area so as to preserve the scenic, cultural, and natural resources while providing for visitor access. It would enhance, rather than alter, the park setting and opportunities for enjoyment of it. It provided a zoning scheme to indicate the management emphasis and allowable uses and facilities in various parts of the park. Officials based the zoning on resource capabilities and on existing and proposed uses. Because of policy related to its National Register listing, the entire park was in a historic zone, but it would include three designated subzones: historic, natural, and park development.[80]

Managing park resources encompassed preserving the view, cultural resources, and natural resources. The preservation of the historic view would continue to require the cooperation of concerned interests. The NPS agreed to coordinate plans with adjacent property owners and other involved parties and seek cooperation from state and local agencies in developing a long-range plan that would minimize visual intrusion from new development outside the park. As for preserving, protecting, and interpreting the park's cultural resources, the NPS would comply with the NHPA of 1966, as amended in 1980; the regulation for "Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties," (36 CFR 800); the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (P.L. 95-341); the NPS "Cultural Resources Management Guideline" (NPS-28); and NPS "Management Policies," 1978.[81]

The preservation and protection of archeological sites or districts would be based on existing historic preservation laws as well as NPS policies and standards. All data recovery would be conducted to the highest professional standards and designed to obtain the most information with the least destruction of archeological resources. Geographic areas not specifically covered by current archeological inventories would be surveyed and this information would be used to plan protection and preservation measures. Because dredge material would destroy or damage archeological resources through compaction, no

[79] Ibid., 10.
[80] Ibid., 10, 12.
[81] Ibid., 13.

dredge spoil would be placed on any portion of the park that was currently fast land and above the high-water mark of Piscataway Creek and the Potomac.[82]

As for natural resources, the NPS would base its management actions on NPS policies and the guidelines and recommendations for Piscataway Park that were in a 1983 resource management plan. Under the plan, it would conduct research and take remedial action if any environmental degradation was identified. In addition it would address issues identified in the 1983 resource management plan, to include shoreline erosion, deer poaching, the illegal trapping of furbearing animals, insect pests including the gypsy moth, tree diseases, and protection of the American bald eagles.[83]

For land protection, the GMP discussed the scenic easement protections in place. Except for a remaining half acre tract, which would eventually be acquired, all properties within the designated fee acquisition boundary had been provided protection by the acquisition of either fee or scenic easement, and the NPS deemed this protection adequate to protect the values the park was established to preserve. The NPS had completed a separate *Land Protection Plan* in October 1983, providing the details of land protection.

Regarding park operations, the plan acknowledged that the park's long shape and geographically segmented areas made it difficult to find locations for management facilities. The central administrative headquarters for Piscataway would remain at NACE and the day-to-day management would remain with the site manager at Fort Washington Park. Onsite operations and visitor services would be located east of Marshall Hall Road. Access to Chief Turkey Tayac's burial site (see below) was within an area for which the Alice Ferguson Foundation held a special use permit, and the NPS was working with the Alice Ferguson Foundation to arrange limited motor vehicle access for family members. The public would be able to access the site by way of a pedestrian trail from the trailhead parking area along Bryan Point Road.[84]

Interpretation

In the early 1980s, the NPS developed plans not only to manage the park effectively, but also to interpret its diverse resources and its significance for visitors. As a first step, in April 1983 the staff at the NPS Harpers Ferry Center in West Virginia released an interim interpretive plan for the park. The purpose of this plan was to guide the short-term interpretive development of the park. More specifically, the plan was to provide park wide visitor orientation, to interpret the parks significant features, and "to create a

[82] Ibid., 14.
[83] Ibid., 15-16.
[84] Ibid., 24.

National Park Service identity for the area." The overarching theme was the preservation of the historic viewshed, but the plan outlined four interpretive subthemes: Paleo-Indian Culture (pre-8000 B.C.); Archaic Indians (8000 B.C. – 1300 B.C.); Woodland Indians (1300 B.C. – 1600 A.D.); and Post Contact Period (1600 A.D. – present).

The proposed plan focused primarily on the Post Contact period. Other themes would be addressed in the future. The plan proposed a series of wayside exhibits for the initial phase of development to provide orientation and interpretation for visitors. It went on to describe those exhibits in greater detail and outline costs for orientation exhibit panels, interpretive exhibit panels at Marshall Hall, and panels at a riverside site with a year-round view of Mount Vernon to interpret the viewshed.[85]

The NPS Harpers Ferry Center proposed interpretative plan was soon followed by the 1983 GMP discussed earlier, which emphasized that any proposed uses and facilities related to interpretation had to preserve the park's scenic, natural, and cultural values. At the time the only interpretive activities in the park were offered at National Colonial Farm and Hard Bargain Farm. Under the GMP, Marshall Hall would be the principal visitor contact point for those not headed to the two farms and natural and cultural resource themes would be presented throughout the park along interpretive trails and wayside exhibits.

The management plan reiterated that primary objective for interpretation was to inform visitors of the park's fundamental purpose – preserving the viewshed from Mount Vernon as it appeared at George Washington's time. The second objective was to present informative programs on the interrelatedness of the park's natural and cultural features. These programs would focus on the combined effects of human adaption and environmental change with the Piscataway Creek area from 12,000 B.C. to the present. The third objective was to explain the ecological principles underlying current environmental influences with the park. To reach those objectives, the plan laid out a series of interpretive themes. The first theme was European Occupation (1608 to the present), the second was Indian Occupation (12,000 B.C. to 1608). The third theme, Natural History of the Potomac River Valley, would emphasize the natural history of the park in keeping with the third objective of explaining the ecological principles underlying current environmental influences within the park. It would highlight the rich diversity of plant and wildlife within a relatively small geographic area.[86]

---

[85] NPS, Harpers Ferry Center, *Piscataway Park: Interim Interpretive Plan*, April 1983, PISC_838_D5_1.
[86] *General Management Plan*, 1983, 16-18.

American Indian Cultural Revival/Chief Turkey Tayac Interment

Turkey Tayac, who claimed to be a 27th generation chief of the Piscataway, was particularly concerned with the Accokeek Creek Site Complex, a site later placed in the National Register. One of the most significant finds at the Accokeek Creek Site Complex was an ossuary (mass burial) said to contain the most important members of the Piscataway tribe. At the request of a group claiming to be descendants of the Piscataway Indians who wanted access to the burial site, in July 1976 the NPS had removed a building that the Fergusons had constructed over this ossuary to protect the remains. Turkey Tayac had gone to that site as a child to collect traditional medicines, and ceremonially burn tobacco in honor of the dead. He supported the park's creation, believing it would protect the sacred site from corporate development. In exchange for his cooperation, Turkey Tayac requested that he be buried there on the sacred ground within the ancient ossuary among his ancestors. In 1978 he was diagnosed with leukemia. Before his death, he once again sought to ensure that his remains were interred in the park. NCR Regional Director Fish had no objection to Turkey Tayac's burial in the park on the condition he provide documentation to support his claim that he was a descendant of the Piscataway tribe and that his ascendancy to chief was authenticated.[87]

When Chief Turkey Tayac passed away in 1979, his relatives refused to bury him until the issue of the burial site had been resolved. With the support of the Maryland General Assembly and the National Congress of American Indians, Congress passed legislation authorizing the burial inside the park. P.L. 96-87, October 12, 1979, directed the Secretary of the Interior to permit Chief Turkey Tayac to be buried in the ossuary in Piscataway Park. It specified that no federal funds would be used for the burial, except as they may be necessary for the department to maintain the site.

Meanwhile, an archeologist in NPS headquarters, Jackson Moore, contacted Bruce Powell, deputy chief of the NPS international park affairs division. Powell had been the NCR regional archeologist from 1962 to 1966 and was familiar with the archeological research that had been undertaken at Piscataway. On October 23, 1979, Moore and other NPS staff visited the park to see the exact location of the proposed burial site and its relationship to known archeological features in the area. The Piscataway wanted to bury Chief Turkey Tayac directly "in front of," meaning on the river side of the memorial cedar tree planted on

[87] Jack Fish to NPS Chief, Congressional Liaison Division, March 17, 1978, NACE files: PISC Remains; NPS, NCP-E, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment,* July 2009, 50; Stanton interview.

the former site of the small building over the ossuary that the NPS had removed a few years earlier. The tree remains an important marker and symbol for the Piscataway.

Decades earlier Alice Ferguson had designated this mass burial site as Ossuary II in her report on her excavations and field work. The ossuary had been partially excavated and 155 burials removed. The remaining burials, which Alice Ferguson estimated to be 95, had been left in situ to form an onsite exhibit protected by the structure described above. Two other ossuaries in the village site had been thoroughly excavated as was another site south of the village. None of the ossuaries contained significant types or amounts of grave items. Dr. Robert L. Stephenson, in his 1963 analysis of the artifacts from the site, had noted that "'The Accokeek Creek site has been so thoroughly excavated as to nearly exhaust the possibilities for collecting additional data or materials.'"[88]

Based on these findings, Powell found no valid scientific reason not to allow the burial at the site the Piscataway had requested. He conceded that the grave excavation could possibly disturb human remains that Ferguson left in Ossuary II and the Piscataway should be made aware of this, but even if that happened he did not believe that any valuable archeological data would be lost. Powell recommended that the park superintendent approve the requested site for the grave. He also recommended that a qualified NPS archeologist be present when the grave was excavated to watch for any unexpected artifacts and ensure that any bones or artifacts uncovered were not removed from the site. Finally, the grave site should be accurately mapped after the burial to make its exact location part of the permanent records of the NPS.[89]

At the same time, archeologist Dr. Richard J. Dent representing the Accokeek Foundation expressed concerns about the proposed burial site. He did not object to burying the chief in the park but urged Regional Director Fish to "use discretion" in selecting the actual burial location. Dent explained that the Accokeek Site was one of the "most important archeological sites in eastern North America," as indicated by its inclusion in the National Register. Unfortunately, almost all of the excavation and research conducted at the site had been undertaken when "the science of archeology was in its infancy." As a result many questions about this important site remained unanswered, he added, and these unanswered questions "weigh heavily on the past of both American Indians and the people whose descendants

[88] See "The Accokeek Creek site, A Middle Atlantic Culture Sequence," by Robert L. Stephenson and Alice L.L. Ferguson, Anthropological Papers No. 20, Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1963, 82.
[89] Memo, Bruce Powell, Deputy Chief, International Park Affairs Division, to Superintendent, National Capital Parks – East, subj: Burial site, Chief Turkey Tayac, October 24, 1979, NPS PHP PISC.

colonized the nation." Dent urged Fish to select an interment site not on the remaining unexcavated areas of the Accokeek Creek archeological site and offered to supervise or undertake the actual excavation of the grave site to ensure the least possible disturbance or destruction of artifacts.[90]

Regional Director Fish assured Dent that the NPS was consulting with archeologist Wayne Clark of the Maryland Historical Trust to develop measures that would avoid any adverse effect on the archeological remains at the site. NPS archeologist Doug Comer would monitor and record the excavation of the burial site. Fish invited Dent to be present and assist in this task.[91]

Maryland state archeologist Tyler Bastian also weighed in on the issue. He supported the interment of Chief Turkey Tayac inside the park calling it "an appropriate memorial and recognition for all American Indians, especially the Piscataway tribe." However, Bastian worried about the interment's short- and long-term impacts on the Accokeek Creek archeological site. Ossuary II where the chief would be buried had until recent years been covered by a cement structure and was the only one of the four known ossuaries that had not been completely excavated. While roughly half of Ossuary II had been removed and exposure in the old concrete block building had damaged some of the remaining portion, Bastian worried that burial in the ossuary would destroy significant historical and archeological information, especially considering the advances in archeological techniques since the original excavation forty years earlier.[92]

Bastian recommended that an archeologist investigate the specific proposed site prior to the burial because of the density of archeological remains at the Accokeek site and the discovery during re-excavations in 1971 and 1972 that much archeological data remained in place despite Ferguson's extensive excavation work during the 1930s. He added that any excavation undertaken, presumably to include the burial, would require a permit under the Antiquities Act of 1906 because the site was on federal land, as well as the concurrence of the Maryland SHPO because the site was listed in the National Register. Finally, Bastian expressed concern that the interment would bring more traffic to a part of the park that had been relatively secluded and protected and perhaps draw "curiosity seekers," artifact collectors, and even "relic diggers." He suggested that some other area of the park might be more appropriate from a long-term point of view. [93]

---

[90] Richard J. Dent, Ph.D. to Jack Fish, NCR Regional Director, October 25, 1979, NPS PHP PISC.
[91] Fish to Dent, November 6, 1979, NPS PHP PISC.
[92] See Stephenson/Ferguson University of Michigan paper, 67-74; Tyler Bastian, State Archeologist, Maryland Geological Survey, to Manus J. Fish, NCR Regional Director, October 25, 1979, NPS PHP PISC.
[93] Bastian to Fish, October 25, 1979.

In his response NCR Regional Director Stanton cited P.L. 96-87 and referenced Powell's recent visit to the area to examine the spot selected for the burial and his conclusion that the burial at this location would not affect the integrity of the archeological site. In accordance with Powell's report, which Stanton provided, the NPS would have a qualified NPS archeologist monitor the excavation and record the location of the burial. Since the clear intent of P.L. 96-87 was that the interment be made in Ossuary II, Stanton added, the NPS was not free to consider alternate locations. The NPS had determined that no Antiquities Act permit was required, but it was complying with the NHPA through consultation with the SHPO.[94]

Stanton informed the Council on Historic Preservation that he had determined that the burial would not adversely affect the ossuary. In accordance with section 800.6(a) of the Council's regulations (36 CFR Part 800), the executive director of the Advisory Council did not object to Stanton's decision.[95] Turkey Tayac was buried on November 11, 1979, but issues related to the burial site would continue to challenge the NPS.

The question of access to the grave site through Alice Ferguson Foundation property remained a challenging one. A Piscataway Indian group would later get NPS permission to hold religious ceremonies in the fields, to include sweat lodge ceremonies. At the draft GMP public hearing in 1983, Billy Tayac complained that their sacred sweat lodges had been torn down and thrown in the river and that his people had been denied access to a sacred site. Billy Tayac went on to emphasize the Piscataway group's willingness to cooperate.[96]

Lawyers for the Alice Ferguson Foundation pointed out that on February 14, 1968, the Foundation had deeded the 85 acres to the federal government and secured a special use permit that would allow them to continue using the land. The Tayac Group argued that it should be allowed access over the Alice Ferguson Foundation's land in order to conduct religious ceremonies and claimed that the Foundation's special use permit conflicted with its rights to practice religious ceremonies in the park. They requested that agricultural activities, particularly plowing, be prohibited on 20 acres of land, including the Turkey Tayac burial site. They wanted free and unrestricted access to the burial site, including unlimited

---

[94] Regional Director, NCR, Robert G. Stanton to Tyler Bastian, Maryland Geological Survey, November 1, 1979, NPS PHP PISC.
[95] Jordan E. Tannenbaum, Chief, Eastern Division of Project Review, Council on Historic Preservation, to Robert G. Stanton, Acting Regional Director, NCR, March 13, 1980, NPS PHP PISC.
[96] Department of the Interior, "Transcript, Public Hearing on the General Management Plan," 1983, 26-28; Straus, 82.

vehicular access over the Alice Ferguson Foundation's roads and the right to stay in the park at night. The NPS had in fact granted the Tayac Group permits for special activities, which limited the number of visitors on the site, the duration of visits, and the method and manner of access to the site, including restricted vehicle access on special occasions. It allowed group members to stay overnight in the park, while no other group had been given such permission. In closing, the Alice Ferguson Foundation's lawyers argued that the first amendment did not grant the Tayac Group a right to use the Alice Ferguson Foundation's private road for access to Chief Tayac's burial site or to exclude either the Foundation or the public from the site.[97] The NPS later built a parking lot with a boardwalk and bridge to provide better access to the grave site.

Archeological Survey (1981)

The 1980s brought an increased focus on archeological investigations inside the park. The area had been a "collecting ground" for amateur archeologists for more than 120 years; it had begun to attract professional attention roughly 90 years earlier though that interest was sporadic. Amateurs continued to perform most of the archeological work, including significant excavations at the Accokeek Creek Site near Mockley Point until the 1960s. After Piscataway gained park status in 1961 professional archeologists from the NPS and local universities became involved. The previous excavations, ranging from small scale mitigations or tests to the excavations of entire villages, provided a significant inventory of artifacts and a glimpse of prehistoric life. In 1966, NPS archeologist Bruce Powell conducted a cursory survey and created a map of suspected archeological sites, mainly within 50 feet of the park's shoreline.[98]

Dr. William Gardner of Catholic University had led the first systematic archeological survey of the park from June 1968 to May 1969 under a contract with the NPS. Gardner often could not adequately inspect the sites because of vegetation and unless the area had been plowed, he had to rely on erosion channels or the riverbank to expose collection materials. He had to rely on Powell's map, published reports, and local informants to find the sites. His approach differed somewhat from traditional site surveys. The principle objective was not to collect artifacts but to locate sites, determine their spatial limits, and determine the general range of archeological cultures represented. His team kept surface collection to a

---

[97] Carolyn E. Agger and James X. Dempsey, Attorneys for Alice Ferguson Foundation, Inc., to Jack Fish, June 6, 1983, NCP-E file: PISC GMP.

[98] William M. Gardner, *Archeological Survey of Piscataway Park, Maryland,* May 1, 1969, 1-3, 18; Thomas E. McGarry, *Piscataway Park Archeological Survey*, December 1982, 11-12; *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation, Environmental Assessment,"* July 2009, 48.

minimum. Gardner correlated sites he found with those that Powell had identified but again the dense vegetation made careful examination and evaluation of sites difficult. His report concluded that the park contained a number of "archeologically rich sites," some representing "multiple component occupations." The Powell and Gardner surveys formally identified a number of additional sites throughout the park.[99]

In 1980 NCR's regional archeologist, Dr. Stephen R. Potter, wrote a lengthy archeological assessment of Piscataway Park in which he discussed the 46 known archeological sites in the park. His goal was to synthesize all the previous archeological work, unpublished and published, and to emphasize the scope and importance of the park's historic and prehistoric archeological sites. Potter's 1980 assessment identified 40 prehistoric and 4 historic sites in the fee area of the park. He ranked the prehistoric sites as having high, medium, low, or potential significance. Thirty of these received a "potential significance" rating because there was not enough data to make an accurate determination otherwise. This created a "sizeable gap" in the existing data base. Potter noted that during the previous 120 years, at least 24 different amateurs and professionals had conducted archeological excavations in the park, with the quality ranging widely, making it difficult to piece together the history of archeology there. Some individuals had made surface collections without writing up the results of their work, and there had been no central repository for the reports that had been generated.[100]

In his 1980 report, Potter recommended that the NPS define the boundaries of known archeological sites more precisely and develop site specific maps. He also highlighted the need for a survey and evaluation of both the standing structures and the historic archeological sites associated with the Euro-American and Afro-American occupation to include an examination of the historic record. Potter recommended there be a site-specific archeological investigation before any ground disturbing activity inside the park. He suggested that the park's general management plan include as an interpretive theme the evolution of prehistoric and historic Amerindian cultures of the Potomac River and that no additional burials be permitted on the Accokeek Creek site because of its archeological significance. Finally, he recommended that the entire park be made an archeological district in the NRHP. "The significance of the park's archeology," he concluded, "is <u>at least equal</u> to the significance derived from maintaining the scenic view

---

[99] Gardner, *Archeological Survey of Piscataway Park, Maryland,* May 1, 1969, 1-3, 18; McGarry, *Piscataway Park Archeological Survey*, December 1982, 11-12; Potter, 1980, 11.
[100] Stephen R. Potter, *A Review of Archeological Resources in Piscataway Park, Maryland,* July 1980, 6-9, 12, NACE files.

from Mount Vernon."[101] Potter's report had a direct impact on Dent's 1980-1982 fieldwork at National Colonial Farm and on a 2007 survey of existing sites for the park's Archeological Sites Management Information System (ASMIS) database.[102]

In 1981 the NPS proposed to undertake a new archeological study. It proposed conducting minor archeological testing at various sites identified in the Review of Archeological Resources in order to evaluate them in terms of National Register criteria and aid their proper management. Deputy Regional Director Stanton assured the Maryland SHPO that the proposed survey would not affect the values that qualified the park, the Accokeek Site, and Marshall Hall for the National Register and requested his concurrence.[103] The SHPO fully supported the park service's proposed plan to study the management of 22 archeological sites located within the park since those investigations would provide useful research and management data.[104] The survey results were printed in 1982 as "Piscataway Archeological Survey – 1981."[105]

Thomas E. McGarry led the 1981 archeological survey. This survey's main objectives were to assess the known, but poorly defined, archeological sites in the park for their significance and interpretive potential and to define the resource management problems in the park. McGarry's NPS team studied several sites in an experimental fashion, using mechanical methods of survey in heavy ground cover. The team observed shoreline erosion from a boat during a survey of the park's shoreline. Using a plow to remove ground cover proved to be very effective in locating archeological sites and providing enough data to distinguish between potentially significant sites and non-significant sites. However, the archeological resources that the team located did not match the published descriptions and the location data was ambiguous. Wave action had eroded significant sites. The data that the survey generated helped define the scope and subsequent archeological work in the park.[106]

McGarry's immediate objective of his survey was to reduce the gap highlighted by Potter's study by locating those sites and determining their size and significance and to provide some missing data to support the GMP being developed at the time. Ultimately McGarry did not find "the sought after data."

---

[101] Ibid., 33-34.
[102] *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects, Environmental Assessment,* July 2009, 48-49.
[103] Deputy Regional Director Robert Stanton to J. Rodney Little, May 15, 1981, NPS PHP PISC. Note on this letter indicates "this completes section 106 compliance on this project."
[104] Little to Stanton, May 18, 1981, NPS PHP PISC.
[105] Memo, Assistant Manager, National Capital Team, DSC to NCR Regional Director, August 12, 1982, NPS PHP PISC.
[106] McGarry*, Piscataway Park Archeological Survey*, December 1982, ii.

His team discovered that existing data bases were insufficient for management and planning needs. The survey report identified problem areas for intensive study in the continuing research project.[107]

The previous archeology work had been sufficient for a resource data base but several sites were poorly defined in the literature. The survey's goal was to locate these sites and fill in the data base. The sites studied were located in agricultural fields used for hay production. Given the time, personnel, and funding limitations, the team used a plow to cut through the thick ground cover to sample the fields rather than the more labor intensive and expansive manual methods, such as test pits or shovel test holes. It was in part an experiment to determine if the plow technique would work well enough to locate sites and differentiate between sites of varying size and significance. Effective use of the plow increased the area they could cover in a sampling survey and provided enough data to identify and assess the sites. The survey results indicated that the location data and site assessments found in the existing literature were "inadequate if not misleading." One of the parks greatest problems in managing its cultural resources was destruction of some of the sites and soil erosion was the greatest contributor to this.

The 1981 survey was a preliminary step to a proposed three-year archeology research program. The program would provide data for the GMP on the following issues: (1) location and boundaries of sites to prevent inadvertent damage from development proposals and management policies; (2) identify sites endangered by erosion and vandalism; (3) recommendations to halt or mitigate site loss; (4) provide information for interpretation of the park's prehistory and history to visitors; (5) identify opportunities to enhance the interpretive data base by more intensive investigation; and (6) assess the significance of archeological resources for nomination to the National Register. Half of the sites that Potter had addressed in his 1980 study lacked sufficient data to be assessed under his criteria of scientific, historic, ethnic, or public significance. Officials decided that sites designated as potentially significant should be revisited and evaluated to complete the data base for the task directive.[108]

Though McGarry's survey did not include Marshall Hall, he had been studying that site since 1979. In the summer of 1981 he had consulted with the park about the removal of the old amusement park structure. He concluded that dismantling of the structure could proceed on the river side of the mansion without the risk of finding significant archeological resources. The area within 50 feet of the mansion and that behind it, landward, was to remain untouched. McGarry followed with a discussion of how the mansion

[107] Ibid., 16, 77.
[108] Ibid., 1-3 5.

related to the existing structures and the inferred location of the other buildings forming the mansion complex.[109]

The mansion, which as noted earlier had been severely damaged by the arson fire in 1981, measured 27 x 60 feet and was built on the southern two-thirds of the land in 1690 or 1725, and the northern third was built about 1760. Around 1800 the new portion of the mansion appears to have been modified. Roughly 30 feet southeast of the house was a small brick out building aligned at a right angle to the axis of the house, which had probably been built in 1760 and reputedly used by Thomas Marshall III (1757-1829) as his office. A large carriage house/stable, also probably built in 1760, had once stood southeast of the brick outbuilding which was razed in 1966 to build a picnic pavilion only recently removed. The cemetery site near the mansion still exists. The mansion and kitchen, outbuilding, carriage house, and cemetery were all that remained or could be proved to have been a part of what was an extensive plantation. The location of other sites could only be inferred by comparison with plantations of equal age and remote sensing data.[110]

Section three of McGarry's report discussed 50 archeological sites: 42 aboriginal sites, 5 historic sites identified by Potter in his 1980 study, and 3 sites found during McGarry's survey. It revealed that "the archeological resources in the park are even more poorly understood than was suspected," McGarry wrote. The archeologists were unable to locate some previously identified sites. The quality of the data related to the area east of National Colonial Farm, he wrote, "can be considered symptomatic of the quality of the data base for the remainder of the park." These data influenced the overriding interest of the forthcoming survey program and "are key to the problems we must confront." The history of archeology in the park, he added, reflected the "poor correlation" among many variables. In 1980 Potter had recognized that the quality of the existing data was not sufficient to manage the park effectively or to develop a GMP, and that "the resources are more complex than the data indicate." McGarry believed his study would provide "empirical data to support those contentions" and the preliminary work needed for the comprehensive survey of the park.[111]

Vandalism of archeological sites by relic hunters was and continues to be a concern. In late 1986 a park ranger discovered signs of illegal excavations at one of the prehistoric archeological sites along the south

[109] Ibid., 65.
[110] Ibid., 67-68.
[111] Ibid., 72-74.

shore of Piscataway Creek, just east of Clagett's Cove. It was one of the park's most significant sites and the resulting scientific damage was "irreparable." To make matters worse, the damage appeared to have been the work of professional collectors. Potter shared the park superintendent's concern about the lack of adequate law enforcement to protect the park's archeological resources. Potter recommended giving law enforcement authority to the park rangers who were patrolling the park. This, he said, would help alleviate the strained resources of the park police in NACE.[112]

Along with these significant archeological studies, there were other major milestones in the park's history during the 1970s and 1980s as well. In 1983 Congress authorized the establishment of a Potomac Heritage Trail, which traversed through the park. In the 1970s and 1980s the park boundaries expanded to include the Marshall Hall property. Meanwhile, the NPS further refined its relationships with its various partners and stakeholders. The presence of the Piscataway Indians in the park and their involvement with the NPS and other park partners increased. The NPS had taken a major step in refining and clarifying its role in managing the park by adopting the 1983 GMP, and as noted the agency had further documented the rich archeological resources within the park. Piscataway Park would continue to face challenges in the coming decades, but with the support and cooperation of the Accokeek Foundation, Alice Ferguson Foundation, and other groups much had been accomplished by the late 1980s.

[112] Stephen R. Potter to Superintendent NCP-E, November 20, 1986, NCP-E files: PISC Archeology.

CHAPTER V

PARK DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION: 1990 – 2016

Comparing the historic view of the Maryland shore from across the Potomac River with the view a visitor to Mount Vernon experiences today reveals little change in the general character of the landscape. The NPS has continued to manage the park so as to retain the scene of agricultural land and open space interspersed with undisturbed forests and wetlands, closely approximating the historic scene. Though the fundamental mission of Piscataway Park has remained the same and the Mount Vernon viewshed has to a great extent successfully been preserved, since 1990, the NPS and the park itself have faced a number of management difficulties and resource challenges. At the same time, the important role of the park's various partners and stakeholders has evolved and continues to evolve.

Park Expansion

The boundaries of Piscataway Park have expanded if only modestly since 1990. In 1991 the MVLA commissioned a study of the viewshed from the piazza of Mount Vernon to ensure that this vista was thoroughly protected. The study identified two major parcels of land beyond the current boundaries of the park, which if developed according to existing zoning regulations, would intrude on this otherwise completely protected viewshed. These tracts comprised approximately 163 acres. The tracts are steeply sloped so that any development would present a visual intrusion on the viewshed. The 1991 viewshed study noted that the tracts contained many important natural, historic, and cultural resource values, including several documented archeological sites. They also provided important habitat for threatened species and varieties of animals, fish, and plants. This viewshed study provided the basis for developing legislation to expand the park's boundaries to include this land.[1]

In 1994 the park comprised more than 4,200 acres, of which roughly 1,500 acres had been acquired in fee title and 2,700 acres had been protected through donated or purchased scenic easements. The Piscataway National Park Expansion Act (P.L. 103-350), signed on October 6, 1994, added the 163 acres of land that had been identified earlier in the viewshed study to the park, as depicted on a 1993 map entitled "Proposed Boundary Map – Piscataway Park." The legislation authorized the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the lands and interests within the areas that this legislation added to the park through

[1] "Piscataway National Park Expansion Act of 1994," *Congressional Record*, v. 140, issue 75, June 16, 1994, online via GPO access (wais.access.gpo.gov).

donations, appropriated funds, or exchange.[2] Three additional tracts totaling 195 acres along the northern shore of Piscataway Creek were added to the park between 1998 and 2001.[3]

More recently, in April 2008, Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD) and Representative Steny Hoyer, from Maryland's 5th Congressional district announced the addition of 73 acres of a "culturally significant and environmentally sensitive" area along the Potomac River to the park. With strong congressional support, federal funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund was allocated to the NPS for the protection of the park land by The Trust for Public Land and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.[4] In recent years the total acreage of the park has climbed to 4,626.[5]

Park Operations and Management

In addition to expansion of the park's boundaries, the period witnessed changes in the park's management and operations, to include the management and operations of the Fort Washington Marina. Recall that the marina was part of the property that the NPS had purchased in fee in the 1970s and became a park service responsibility at that time. For a number of years this marina tucked away at the back of Piscataway Bay had been neglected. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the derelict Fort Washington Marina had been the site of what park service staff described as a rundown "hobo camp," occupied by homeless individuals. The NPS managed the site directly for a few years with its own concession management. The situation improved in 1986 when the NPS entered into a 30-year agreement with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to take over responsibility for the day-to-day management and operations of the marina, as it did with several other marinas in the state. The State of Maryland brought in its own concessioners, and the NPS had little direct involvement. The state made plans for improvements that it wanted to make to the marina, and the NPS reviewed their plans to ensure that there would be no intrusions on the viewshed. NACE resource personnel Stephen Syphax and Jim Rosenstock worked with state officials to achieve that goal. The downside of this arrangement was that those using the marina often had no idea that they were on national park property. The NPS had no, what

---

[2] 103d Congress, P.L. 103-350, October 6, 1994, 108 STAT. 3146, "An Act to expand the boundaries of Piscataway Park, and for other purposes"; "Proposed Boundary Map – Piscataway Park," dated November 17, 1993.
[3] NPS, NCP-E, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment,* July 2009, 4.
[4] "Cardin, Hoyer Announce Addition of 73 Acres to Piscataway National Park," April 28, 2008, https://www.cardin.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release, accessed May 13, 2016.
[5] Department of the Interior, "National Park Service Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Justification," (NPS Green Book), see www.nps.gov.

Rosenstock called, "messaging presence" there. The Maryland DNR cleaned up the site and managed the concessions there effectively.[6]

In October 2015 the DNR informed the NPS that it wanted to turn responsibility for operating the marina back over to the NPS when the existing agreement expired on October 4, 2016. The DNR later agreed to extend its oversight of the marina operations until November 11, 2016, and the NPS took over on that date. The NPS now faces some challenges related to the future of the marina's management and operations.[7]

Piscataway Park's residents and partners who hold scenic easements have been, and continue to be, a major influence on the park's management. Although the use of scenic easements was critical to the creation of the park and continues to play a key role in its existence, these scenic easements also present a management challenge. Most of this scenic easement land is heavily wooded with rolling hills and scattered large-lot residential units. Many of the residents are members of the Moyaone Association, which helps ensure that the development and use of the easement lands are compatible with the park's legislative mandate to preserve the historic viewshed stipulated in their deed covenants.[8]

As it had since its establishment, the park continued to operate without any designated full-time staff onsite. Often the NPS staff needed to perform the daily upkeep and maintenance came from nearby Fort Washington Park. For decades the management of Piscataway Park fell to the site manager for Fort Washington Park who in turn reported to NACE. In 2009, Fort Washington had only 18 onsite staff who conducted the functions needed to accomplish management objectives and to meet the requirements of law enforcement, emergency services, public health and safety, resource protection and management, visitor services, interpretation and education, and community services. Although Fort Washington Park's responsibility was clear, its staff did not play an active role in Piscataway Park's day-to-day management and operations.[9]

Piscataway Park remained under the management of the NACE superintendent until 2015 when the NPS created a new superintendent position with responsibility for Piscataway Park, Fort Washington Park,

---

[6] Stephen Syphax, interview by author, January 13, 2017, 8; James Rosenstock, interview by author, March 2, 2017.
[7] Christine Smith, interview by author, January 31, 2017, 3; Rosenstock interview.
[8] "Statement for Management," rev. 1/92, NACE files: Legislative History.
[9] NPS, NCP-E, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment,* July 2009, 51; Rosenstock interview; Alexcy Romero, interview by author, July 19, 2017.

Oxon Cove Park, Fort Foote Park, and Harmony Hall. Christine Smith became the superintendent for these park units responsible for their day-to-day operations, with an office at Oxon Hill Farm. She soon found that she faced special challenges as superintendent in managing a park that had no designated permanent staff assigned to it, but at the same time she benefited from having many supportive partners. Smith interpreted the creation of her superintendent position as an indicator of the park service's increased commitment to the park.[10]

The park's partners were pleased when the NPS designated a superintendent for Piscataway Park. After years of dealing with numerous park service representatives at various levels in that agency and finding frequent turnover in NPS personnel, they were pleased to have a primary contact in the NPS who they could deal with directly. Some partners interpreted the appointment of a superintendent for the park as a sign of the park service's increased commitment not only to improved collaboration but also to the park's future. Accokeek Foundation and MVLA leaders indicated that they have found their relationships with the NPS much improved since Smith became superintendent. Soon after Smith's assignment as superintendent, the partners sent out a letter on NPS letterhead to all of the park's scenic easement holders introducing the new superintendent and providing them with information about their easements. The letter received positive feedback.[11]

Scenic easements remained a critical management tool for the NPS and for park officials. If there were easement violations, the U.S. Park Police had legal authority to enforce the terms of the easement. In the past, an NPS representative would receive a report or complaint of a potential easement violation and go visit the property to assess the situation and speak with the property owner. The NPS representative would then make a determination about whether or not the owner could remove a tree or trees for example. However, the basis for that determination could vary from one park service official to another, and Superintendent Smith concluded that the park needed more formalized procedures for making these determinations. She began work on developing a formalized agreement, a standard operating procedure (SOP), to provide guidance on the way the park service manages easements.[12]

For decades Jim Rosenstock from NACE and others in NACE resource manage played an essential role in responding to requests or complaints related to scenic easement restrictions, such as a homeowner request to remove a tree or to construct a new facility on the property such as a shed or greenhouse.

---

[10] Smith interview.
[11] Megan Dunn, interview by author, February 14, 2017; Lisa Hayes, interview by author, February 17, 2017.
[12] Smith interview.

Rosenstock had no law enforcement authority, but he soon found that a collaborative approach could be very effective. Fort Washington staff had not always been as responsive as they should have been, Rosenstock conceded, and he was determined to improve the NPS response time. He also focused on improving communication with the property owners. He was always willing to visit properties in a timely manner to talk to the property owners. He discovered that the language of individual scenic easements varied. All easements were not exactly the same. They could differ in various details such as the total acreage the property owner could clear out of his or her five acres. Some property owners had specific concerns that they wanted their easements to address. Also, he found that the language in the easements was often broad enough that he was able to negotiate effectively with most property owners, though he conceded that some of his determinations were ultimately "a judgement call."[13] Reflecting on his involvement with the park during the 1970s, former NPS Director Bob Stanton said it was important to maintain a relationship with property owners who held scenic easements that emphasized not only the "letter" of the agreement, but the "spirit" of the agreement as well.[14]

Superintendent Smith quickly recognized that there was an important education process involved when dealing with scenic easements. She worked, and continues to work, closely with representatives from MVLA, Accokeek Foundation, Alice Ferguson Foundation, the Moyaone Association, and Prince George's County and Charles County to address this issue. Every few months, one of the organizations hosts a stakeholders meeting with representatives from its partner organizations and county officials. Attendees discuss better ways to educate the public about the scenic easements. Interest in and support for this group has grown. These quarterly meetings have done much to promote effective collaboration and communication and strengthen the relationships among the partners, and the number of participants in these meetings has grown.[15]

With the passage of time, issues related to scenic easements have brought a new challenge. Today any easement that is older than 50 years does not automatically appear on a title search of a particular property. After 50 years an individual can conduct a standard title search on a particular property and the reference to the scenic easement no longer appears in the official record. As a result, when an individual is interested in purchasing a property, a title search does not automatically reveal that there is an existing scenic easement on that property. New property owners and prospective property owners do not always

[13] Rosenstock interview; Romero interview.
[14] Robert G. Stanton, interview by author, March 21, 2017.
[15] Smith interview; Dunn interview; Hayes interview; Miles interview.

think to ask if there are any existing easements on their land. The prospective buyer might purchase the property without any knowledge of the easement. Rosenstock observed that at times he found himself dealing with property owners who had no idea their property was under scenic easement. Educating prospective and current property owners about the easements has become even more critical. This issue has become increasingly important since many of the original scenic easements are currently reaching the 50-year mark. Many of the original scenic easements for the Moyaone Reserve were signed when the Moyaone Association was created roughly 50 years ago.

To highlight concerns related to this easement issue, Smith and her major partner organizations sent out a letter to all the addressees for properties that have existing scenic easements providing them with additional information about their easements. MVLA also developed a website where individual property owners could enter their addresses and pull up their easement document. MVLA continues to work diligently to foster and maintain communication and a cooperative relationship with the scenic easement holders, to include occasionally hosting receptions for them on the lawn of the Mount Vernon estate with cocktails and a sunset cruise. Long-term residents want to ensure that new property owners abide by the same easement restriction that they do.[16]

There is another important issue related to scenic easements as well. When the first scenic easements were put in place in the 1960s, most of these easements were donated by Moyaone residents who were anxious to do so because they wanted to protect a lifestyle and environment that they valued and had chosen. With some exceptions, these Moyaone property owners indicated that they favored conveying their scenic easements to the federal government even if it meant a decline in the value of their property. These original Moyaone residents fully understood what they were doing when they conveyed their easements. There was a single real estate agent in the Moyaone community and she made sure to inform potential buyers about the easements. By the 1990s, however, a number of the original owners had moved or passed away, and their sons and daughters who inherited the property sometimes wanted to build on their land. Sometimes they wanted to sell their land to someone who wanted to build on or alter the property. Both the sellers and buyers of the property needed to be better informed about the easement requirements and restrictions.[17]

[16] Smith interview; Dunn interview; Rosenstock interview; Miles interview.
[17] Rosenstock interview; Miles interview.

During this period, zone management, as laid out in the park's 1983 GMP, continued to be another key factor in park management and operations. Piscataway Park was managed in the historical category, as a historic landscape, allowing for the continuing maintenance of already developed areas. Activities or developments are not permitted to infringe adversely upon the park's historic and natural assets, which were listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Historic Zone and the subzones were arranged into four management units.

The eastern end of the park was the Piscataway Creek Management Unit, which contained a natural/cultural subzone. This unit contained an underground utility pipeline and a county road (Wharf Road) that terminated at a small parking lot on Piscataway Creek. The Mockley Point Management Unit was a special use area used by the Alice Ferguson Foundation's Hard Bargain Farm for environmental education programs and agriculture. There was a boardwalk along the Potomac which crossed marsh and swamp lands at the mouth of Accokeek Creek.

The Accokeek Management Unit was further west on the Potomac shore and contains natural/cultural subzones and the special use area of the National Colonial Farm. Further west and separated from the other units was the Marshall Hall Management Unit, which contained the historic Marshall Hall site. There was a large natural/cultural area.[18]

Cooperative Agreements Update

The successful operation of the park and the protection and preservation of its cultural and natural resources remained heavily dependent on the park service's effective management of its decades-long partnerships with both the Alice Ferguson Foundation and the Accokeek Foundation. The Alice Ferguson Foundation's May 21, 1963 cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior stipulated that this agreement would have to be renewed or cancelled after 20 years. In 1983 the NPS and the Alice Ferguson Foundation renewed the agreement for an additional 20-year period, ending on May 21, 2003. On June 26, 1992, the two parties agreed to amend the agreement. Amendment No. 1, as it was called, included a provision that the NPS, subject to the availability of appropriations for the purposes of this agreement, would make available federal financial assistance to the Alice Ferguson Foundation "to support and stimulate" the programs and activities of the Hard Bargain Farm so long as the Alice Ferguson Foundation maintained the accounting records as prescribed by the NPS. In sum, the amendment served to recognize

[18] "Statement for Management, Piscataway Park," rev. 1/92.

and continue the Alice Ferguson Foundation's interpretive and other activities inside the park and to provide for federal financial assistance to the Alice Ferguson Foundation to support and stimulate its activities and programs in the park.[19]

In 2003, the NPS and the Alice Ferguson Foundation signed Amendment #2 to the existing cooperative agreement. Amendment #2 stated that the Foundation could receive $397,000 of NPS appropriated funds for Fiscal Year 2003 for the repair, rehabilitation, and improvement of the facilities at Hard Bargain Farm. More specifically, the Alice Ferguson Foundation was to use the funds for repairs and improvements to the Ferguson Center, for general infrastructure improvements, for repair and restoration to the Hilltop Structures, for repairs and improvements to the Farm Manager's House, for repairs and restoration of the Log Cabin, and improvements to the Cottage. The Alice Ferguson Foundation, however, could not expend any of these funds on any activity without first completing all NPS National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) or NHPA requirements.[20]

Similarly, the original January 8, 1963 cooperative agreement between the NPS and the Accokeek Foundation was also amended. On March 4, 1998, the Accokeek Foundation and the NPS signed Amendment No. 2. Amendment No. 2 added language to the cooperative agreement stating that subject to applicable regulations, the availability of appropriations, and the terms of this agreement, the NPS would provide the Accokeek Foundation with $200,000 of the funds appropriated to the NPS for construction pursuant to P.L. 105-83 to the Accokeek Foundation for the construction of an addition to the existing educational facilities and of a new outdoor education pavilion, and for the repair, renovation, and improvement of existing facilities at Piscataway Park. The availability of these funds was contingent on certifying that matching funds were available from the State of Maryland.[21]

The NPS and the Accokeek Foundation renewed their existing cooperative agreement in 2002. Under this updated 20 year agreement, the NPS approved the Accokeek Foundation's use of a portion of the park, the area bounded by Bull Cove on the west, the fee lands boundary on the south, the Potomac River on

---

[19] "Amendment No. 1 to the Agreement Between the Secretary of the Interior of the United States and the Alice Ferguson Foundation, Inc., dated May 21, 1963," signed by NCR Director Robert Stanton and President, Alice Ferguson Foundation, Inc., June 26, 1992, NACE files: Alice Ferguson Foundation.

[20] "Amendment No. 2 to the Agreement Between the National Park Service and the Alice Ferguson Foundation, Inc.," signed by NCR Director Terry R. Carlstom and President, Alice Ferguson Foundation, September 26, 2003, NACE Files: Alice Ferguson Foundation.

[21] "Agreement between the Secretary of the Interior of the United States and the Accokeek Foundation, Inc., Amendment No. 2," signed by Acting NCR Director Joseph M. Lawler and Accokeek Foundation, March 4, 1998, NACE Files: Accokeek Foundation, Cooperative Agreement.

the north, and the eastern edges of Tract 12 and the Ecosystem Farm field on the east. The agreement referred to this area as the "Foundation Use Area" and specified the various approved Foundation activities in this area. The NPS gave the Accokeek Foundation approval to conduct interpretive and educational boat trips and to allow community and other group uses of the facilities within the Foundation Use Area. The NPS agreed to provide, at no expense to the Accokeek Foundation, the appropriate law enforcement and security necessary for the safe and proper use of the park by the Foundation and the public.

In addition, the NPS would, subject to availability of funds, consider requests for federal financial assistance to the Accokeek Foundation to support its programs and activities covered by this agreement. The agreement acknowledged that the NPS had management responsibility for the park and would provide structural building and infrastructure repair to all buildings, structures, and facilities on lands that the Foundation used within the available resources and park priorities. It stipulated that the Accokeek Foundation could not construct, renovate, demolish, or remove any buildings, structures, or physical facilities without first obtaining written approval from the superintendent.[22]

Meanwhile, the NPS finalized and approved a fundraising agreement with the Accokeek Foundation in 2002. The agreement allowed the Accokeek Foundation to raise approximately $2 million in non-federal funds over the next three years. This funding would supplement NPS dollars to build and operate a new education facility at Piscataway Park.[23]

Having clarity in these cooperative agreements is critical to their success. There must be a clear understanding of the common goals. In 2017, Accokeek Foundation President Lisa Hayes and Superintendent Smith have begun discussing the next cooperative agreement which is scheduled to come in eight years. Hayes noted that some of the language in the current 2002 cooperative agreement was vague and they are working to address this. For example, the agreement stated that the Foundation was responsible for "routine maintenance," while the NPS was responsible for the infrastructure. However, the exact meaning of term "routine maintenance" remains unclear.[24]

---

[22] "Cooperative Agreement between National Park Service, National Capital Parks-East and The Accokeek Foundation, Inc.," signed by NCR Director Terry R. Carlstrom and Charles D. Estes, Chair, Board of Trustees, Accokeek Foundation, Inc., May 16, 2002, NACE Files: Accokeek Foundation, Cooperative Agreement.
[23] *National Capital Region Annual Report 2003*, NPS PHP.
[24] Smith interview; Hayes interview; Stanton interview.

As noted earlier, the original NPS cooperative agreements with the Alice Ferguson and Accokeek foundations were for 20 years, but over time the NPS moved toward using shorter-term agreements with its partners and contractors. This trend led to a five-year cooperative agreement between the NPS and the Alice Ferguson Foundation that is due for renewal in 2017. The process of concluding a new five-year agreement is nearly complete. The agreement as envisioned would allow the Foundation to access lands that were currently park lands for agricultural uses so that they could mow and hay those areas. The Alice Ferguson Foundation would be able to take their students down to the boardwalk. Negotiating the Alice Ferguson Foundation's current agreement was a relatively simple process and similar to one the NPS used when it signed with other non-profit organizations. Under the next agreement, the Alice Ferguson Foundation would continue to provide educational programs inside the park, with some funding from the NPS for those programs. It would continue its important stewardship role and its role in educating the public about their environmental and agricultural role

The Accokeek Foundation, however, remains under a 20-year agreement from 2002 that is due to be renewed in the next few years. Reaching an agreement with the Accokeek Foundation will likely be a more complicated process for the NPS since unlike the Alice Ferguson Foundation, the Accokeek Foundation continues to operate on park land and use NPS facilities. The importance of these updated cooperative agreements to the future of the park cannot be underestimated. Superintendent Smith emphasized the fact these cooperative agreements are legislatively mandated. In the original legislation, Congress mandated that the NPS would manage the park through partnerships, cooperative agreements, and scenic easements.[25]

Potomac River Conservation

From its beginning, the park's mission, management, and operations have been closely linked to the conservation of the Potomac River, and this issue took on increasing importance in recent decades. In 1969, there had been a conference at Mount Vernon to address major environmental problems associated with the Potomac River. Roughly 30 years later the effort of President Lyndon Johnson's administration to clean up the river continued. In March 1990 a group once again gathered at a conference at Mount Vernon to discuss the health and future of the Potomac River. Participants included some of the original park advocates and conservation advocates, to include Robert Straus, Cecil Wall, and Frederick Gutheim, as well as Wilton C. Corkern, the recently hired director of the Accokeek Foundation

[25] Smith interview; Miles interview.

at the time. Straus reminded the conference participants that it had taken five acts of Congress, amending the state of Maryland's constitution, writing tax reform legislation, and overcoming numerous obstacles to achieve their conservation goal. To further their mission, he recalled, they had met at Mount Vernon in 1969 to extend the work that George Washington had begun in 1785 to foster the peaceful use of the Potomac River. Seeing the consensus at that 1969 meeting, Straus added, Representative Saylor had introduced a bill to "carry out the purposes agreed upon." After Saylor's death a few days later, others pushed to enact legislation that would ensure the protection of the Potomac River, Straus explained, "but the time was not ripe." Now, with the current apprehension about the state of the river, he added, the time had finally come. Straus expressed his hope that the current conference would mark a turning point in the movement to preserve the river.[26]

The Accokeek Foundation had actually scheduled three major conferences for the winter and spring of 1990 to help set its course for the future. One of these conferences focused on the conservation of the Potomac River. The March 1990 conference called "The Nation's River Toward the Twenty First Century: a Conference on the Potomac River" at Mount Vernon took on the mission of trying to get the Potomac River formally designated as a National Riverway. Accokeek Foundation board member Kevin Coyle who had previously served with the National Park Service, at the time was president of the American Rivers organization, and he led the Accokeek Foundation's effort to get the National Riverway designation for the Potomac River.[27]

The NPS was well represented at the Potomac River conference. Both NPS Division Chief of Recreational Resources Assistance William Spitzer and NPS Branch Chief for Technical Assistance Chris Brown attended and addressed the conference. Brown told the audience that over the next decade the NPS hoped to develop advocacy groups for every river along the Potomac Basin, and it also saw the need for a basin-wide advocacy group. Spitzer encouraged the audience to involve the private sector in new ways. He acknowledged that securing funds for preservation would be a major undertaking.[28]

---

[26] "The Nation's River Toward the Twenty First Century: A Conference on the Potomac River," Accokeek Foundation, January 1991, MVLA, Operation Overview Black Binder.
[27] Wilton Corkern, interview by author, January 17, 2017; "The Nation's River Toward the Twenty First Century: A Conference on the Potomac River," Accokeek Foundation, January 1991, 5-6, 25-26, Operation Overview Black Binder.
[28] Corkern interview; "The Nation's River Toward the Twenty First Century: A Conference on the Potomac River," 5-6, 25-26.

The Accokeek Foundation later joined with the Maryland Historical Trust in starting what was called the Potomac River Heritage Project and sought some kind of recognition or designation for the stretch of the Potomac River from Washington, DC down to the Chesapeake Bay. Getting that designation would make the Potomac eligible for conservation measures, funding, and other benefits. The American Heritage River Protection Program was authorized by E.O. 13061 during President William Clinton's administration on September 11, 1997 to support the existing community-based efforts to preserve, protect, and restore rivers in their communities. NCR Regional Director and then NPS Director Bob Stanton was a strong advocate for the American Heritage River designation and called it a "great victory." The heritage river designation was important, he said, because it represented the diversity of the cultural and natural resources of the region and because it would provide for preservation in that area. In a broader sense, he added, it would strengthen the connection of local communities to the river and raise their awareness of the richness of the resources of Chesapeake Bay. The Potomac River became one of the first rivers to get this American Heritage River designation. The Potomac River was one of the 14 American Heritage Rivers or systems that President Clinton designated on July 30, 1998. Meanwhile, the Accokeek Foundation partnered with the NPS in creating a new organization called Friends of the Potomac.[29]

Developments at National Colonial Farm

In addition to its efforts to promote Potomac River conservation, the Accokeek Foundation turned its attention to National Colonial Farm. To support its operations at National Colonial Farm, in early 1998 the Accokeek Foundation asked the NPS for permission to install a well and pipeline at the farm in order to provide potable water in an area where it currently did not exist. However, the area specified was an archeologically sensitive one along the banks of the Potomac, so park management required the Accokeek Foundation to conduct archeological testing. The archeological test results were negative, and there was no archeological objection to constructing the well. NACE Superintendent Gentry Davis asked the Maryland Historical Trust for guidance in reaching a final decision.[30]

In summer 1998 there were further discussions and meetings related to the future development and operations of National Colonial Farm. NPS officials had been making their decisions based on the farm's 1980 Development Concept Plan, while also recognizing the programmatic needs of the farm. Recognizing those needs, Accokeek Foundation President Corkern had prepared a draft concept

[29] Corkern interview, 9; Stanton interview.
[30] NACE Superintendent Gentry Davis to Elizabeth J. Cole, February 25, 1998, NACE file: PISC Interpretation.

proposing adjustments to the existing plan. NACE Acting Superintendent John Hale indicated that many of those proposals could be approved, while others would require more analysis and discussion. Corkern's proposals had to be sensitive to the rich archeological resources below the farm complex.[31]

Superintendent Hale explained that use of the property included the following four elements: visitor parking and orientation, the colonial demonstration farm, administration and maintenance, and the Ecosystem Farm discussed later. The existing parking and visitor center, he explained, would remain as it was without any further additions. The archeological resources found around the visitor center precluded further expansion. The NPS agreed that the interior of the visitor center needed reorientation in order to shift some of its emphasis from retail sales to exhibits.[32]

Hale added that the shift of the National Colonial Farm complex slightly to the north over the years was an improvement over the existing plan and the buildings had been constructed "with the utmost care" for the archeological resources. He directed the Foundation to proceed with the kitchen addition. He also recommended that the Accokeek Foundation demolish the old kitchen when the new one was added. He opposed converting the animal barn to an interior assembly area for school groups and recommended that it be demolished.

As for administration of the site, the existing plan called for relocating the Accokeek Foundation's administrative function to the hillside next to the maintenance facility. This location, Hale added, was far too open and the proposed structure could potentially be seen from Mount Vernon. The NPS recommended further discussion about the concept of erecting a new administrative building with a classroom to the north of the existing entrance road. Regarding the Ecosystem Farm, the NPS agreed that the proposal for building a shed on the farm east side of the fields and tucked into the trees by the service entrance was "necessary and desirable" and looked forward to reviewing a plan for this.[33]

In the early 2000s the NPS had to address the Accokeek Foundation's proposal for a new visitor center and education center at National Colonial Farm. The NPS adhered to NEPA and to its own policies in amending the 1980 Development Concept Plan (DCP) for National Colonial Farm, which by the early 2003 had only been partially implemented. Since the adoption of the DCP in 1980, the NPS had accumulated

---

[31] John Hale, Acting Superintendent, NCP-E, to Wilton Corkern, August 3, 1998, NACE file: Accokeek Foundation, Accokeek Correspondence.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

much new information about the park's natural and cultural resources. Some of the National Colonial Farm sites described in the DCP had been only slightly altered to avoid historic and archeological resources and to avoid a negative impact on the views from Mount Vernon and Fort Washington. As the 1980 DCP predicted, the farm's programs and visitation had increased during the past 20 years, and both the NPS and the Accokeek Foundation agreed that the 1980 DCP needed to be revised. The mechanism for revising the DCP included conducting a new environmental assessment with the appropriate public involvement process.[34]

The primary purpose of the 2003 EA was to address the location of a planned visitor orientation and education center so as to meet the growing need for visitor services and at the same time remain consistent with NPS preservation and interpretive objectives. The environmental assessment documented the environmental impacts associated with three alternatives for the proposed education center. The NPS made the EA available for public review for 30 days, held a public meeting, and consulted with the Maryland SHPO, the Virginia SHPO, and the MVLA. Based on this input, it selected the parking lot site as the preferred alternative because it would have the least impact on archeological, cultural, or historical resources. Both the Maryland and Virginia SHPOs and the MVLA concurred. The February 2003 EA and a related Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) contained a record of this decision making process. NACE Superintendent Hale reviewed the assessment and recommended that NCR Regional Director Terry Carlstrom approve it.[35]

The NPS completed its review of the EA for the proposed Accokeek Foundation Visitor Orientation and Education Center. In August 2003 it released its notice of decision and findings on the NPS selection of the preferred alternative and that this preferred alternative had resulted in a FONSI. Therefore the NPS would proceed with the preferred alternative. The NPS had prepared an environmental assessment for this project, which was available for public review in March and April of 2003, and it had held a public information meeting in the Accokeek Foundation headquarters in the park on April 12, 2003.[36]

---

[34] Memo, Sally Blumenthal, NCR, to Rebecca Stevens, August 26, 2003, NACE FILE: Accokeek Foundation, Accokeek Correspondence.
[35] Ibid.
[36] "Notice of Decision and Finding on Environmental Assessment for Accokeek Foundation Visitor Orientation and Education Center, Piscataway Park," 1, NACE files: Accokeek Foundation, Accokeek Correspondence, recommended by Supt. John Hale on August 15, 2003 and approved by NCR Regional Director Terry R. Carlstrom, August 27, 2003, NACE files: Accokeek Foundation, Accokeek Correspondence.

NPS officials selected the preferred alternative (#3) outlined in the environmental assessment: to construct a separate visitor orientation and education center that would be located adjacent to the existing visitor parking area. Much of the area had been disturbed in the early 1980s when the existing gatehouse was constructed and the visitor parking lot was expanded to its present size. The NPS had completed its responsibilities related to Section 106 of the NHPA. In compliance with Section 106, a recent archeological evaluation confirmed that the site contained no significant resources. The site proposed in the preferred alternative was on previously disturbed land, in an area considered unlikely to contain significant cultural resources. Also tests were conducted to ensure that the proposed building would not adversely affect the historic views.[37]

The NPS concluded that the project would not impair Piscataway Park's original mission and purpose. The historic views from Mount Vernon, Fort Washington, and George Washington Memorial Parkway would be preserved by the screening of the new building and the use of building materials and colors that would blend with the background landscape. No significant archeological resources would be affected.[38] The Maryland SHPO reviewed the draft report on the archeological investigations of the proposed project area and determined that no further archeological investigations were warranted. It concurred with the NPS determination that the project would not adversely effect on the cultural resources.[39] The Accokeek Foundation opened a new "green" education center in 2005 to host school tours, educational programming, and meetings.[40]

Two years later, at its January 8, 2007 meeting, the NACE Project Review Committee reviewed the Accokeek Foundation's proposal to create a new visitor entrance to National Colonial Farm. The Foundation proposed to create a new visitor (pedestrian) entrance with new walkways and landscaping and modifications to the existing Saylor Grove parking lot. The proposal's primary feature was a 122-foot wide circular footpath located approximately 130 feet from the northwest corner of the education building. Although it was closely tied to the new education center, it was not part of the earlier environmental assessment and FONSI that had previously been developed. NACE resource manager Syphax expressed concern that the proposal went beyond the site's existing DCP and beyond the park's 1983 GMP. The issue was not primarily whether the new entrance was a good idea but that it clearly

---

[37] Ibid., 2.
[38] Ibid., 5.
[39] Ibid., 2.
[40] Our History and Timeline – Accokeek Foundation, http://accokeekfoundation.org/our-history-timeline/, accessed February 6, 2017.

involved planning at a level similar to a DCP. He argued that the Accokeek Foundation and National Colonial Farm needed to have an updated management plan rather than piecemeal site development.[41]

Syphax pointed out that for years both the NPS and the Accokeek Foundation had recognized that the current DCP for National Colonial Farm was outdated and that it "sorely need[ed] replacement." Approximately five years earlier NACE representatives had met with National Capital Region and Accokeek Foundation staffs to discuss the Foundation's development proposals. At that meeting NCR Assistant Regional Director J. Parsons had highlighted the need for a new DCP to address their proposed site development comprehensively and initiate the necessary process and NEPA requirements. That planning process was never initiated. The new education center did go forward under a separate environmental assessment. Now, the Accokeek Foundation was proposing another new development. At an earlier meeting, Matt Muldar of the Accokeek Foundation had emphasized that the Foundation was going to move forward with the new entrance plan, which, said Syphax, demonstrated a "clear lack of understanding" of the NPS role in managing the park.[42]

Rosenstock observed that the proposed visitor/education center was "right at ground zero" in terms of the Mount Vernon viewshed, and the NPS had to hold tests that involved floating red balloons at the proposed site inside the park. Meanwhile, Rosenstock went across the river and looked out from Mount Vernon with his binoculars to make sure that none of those red balloons were visible and that there would be no negative impact.[43]

In recent years the NPS has begun the process of preparing a new DCP for National Colonial Farm. This is a long-term planning effort that will come out as an environmental assessment and will direct the park's construction related to the farm for the next ten to fifteen years.[44] Initially the Accokeek Foundation's role in preparing the development plan was limited. However, perhaps reflecting the improved collaboration between the NPS and the Foundation in recent years, Hayes and the Accokeek Foundation are now directly involved in the current effort to prepare the new DCP. She pointed out that the only existing DCP, which the Accokeek Foundation had taken the lead on and hired a contractor to prepare, dated from 1980, which was before the historic tobacco barn had been moved to the National Colonial

[41] Memo, Chair, Project Review Committee, NCP-E (Stephen Syphax) to Superintendent NCP-E, January 12, 2007, NACE file: Accokeek Foundation, Accokeek Correspondence.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Rosenstock interview.
[44] Smith interview.

Farm and before rebuilding the Laurel Branch house discussed earlier. The NPS had informed the Accokeek Foundation that it was not authorized to do anything that was not in the plan. The 1980 plan focused only on National Colonial Farm; not the rest of the site. By contrast, the current DCP identified where a new administration building would be located and a new visitor center.[45]

Ecosystem Farm

Since 1990, the Accokeek Foundation and park officials have focused their attention not only on National Colonial Farm, but also on what became the Ecosystem Farm. In 1990 the Accokeek Foundation had a wealthy board member, Jean Wallace Douglas, who was the daughter of Henry Aggard Wallace, former Secretary of Agriculture. Douglas was very committed to advances in agriculture. She and Robert Straus came up with the idea of focusing on the future of agriculture as well as its past. Douglas agreed to fund what would be called the Ecosystem Farm one year at a time for the first few years. The Accokeek Foundation hired a professional to help set up the program. After some back and forth, the NPS ultimately approved the Ecosystem Farm project. One challenge the project faced was that the Accokeek Foundation selected a parcel of land for the new farm that had been a tobacco field for roughly 300 years and the soil was poor. It began rebuilding the soil, installed a solar powered irrigation system and a solar powered well.[46]

The Ecosystem Farm was an eight-acre farm that unlike National Colonial Farm focused on sustainable farm crops and demonstrated effective organic techniques on soil that was first farmed by American Indians at least 800 years ago and then farmed continuously for the past 350 years. The Accokeek Foundation formally established the Ecosystem Farm in 1990 as an education demonstration area within Piscataway Park. It has since been used by school children, teachers, college students, public officials, and the public. The farm allowed the Accokeek Foundation's education staff to support NPS "parks as classrooms" programs, programs which provide curriculum materials for children visiting park units within NACE. It provided a forum for interpreting the relationship between people and the land.[47]

In the late 1990s some NACE staff expressed concern that the Accokeek Foundation's improvement plans included significant new construction in the Ecosystem Farm area, an area beyond the core of National Colonial Farm and not identified specifically in the 1963 cooperative agreement or in any other

[45] Hayes interview.
[46] Corkern interview.
[47] Accokeek Foundation, "Robert Ware Straus Ecosystem Farm Proposal to Install Well," February 28, 1997, NACE files: Accokeek Foundation, Accokeek Correspondence.

document. In the past, the Foundation's use of areas other than National Colonial Farm, such as the Ecosystem Farm area, had been handled through special use permits and had involved primarily agricultural activities, not new construction.[48]

Some NPS staff raised concerns about the Accokeek Foundation's fundraising activities. Though those activities were "innovative and unusual," it was unclear what arrangements or agreements the Foundation had with NPS authorizing them to conduct those activities. NPS personnel had were two specific areas of concern. For a number of years National Colonial Farm had been collecting and handling entrance fee money, but this did not seem to conform to the NPS Recreational Fee Guidelines (NPS-22). The park staff could not identify any previous arrangements with the NPS that authorized the Accokeek Foundation to collect those fees.

A second concern was that the Accokeek Foundation was selling produce grown in the "extended" portion of their site to its supporters and local residents. Some NACE staff believed this practice violated NPS guidelines. To support its produce sales operation, the Foundation had constructed small greenhouses and wanted to construct a new water line, shed and pavilion. NPS staff also had reservations about the water storage tank (for irrigation) located along the shore and recommended that the Accokeek Foundation remove it. Finally, NPS staff members were concerned that the agreement between the Foundation and the NPS was outdated and did not follow current NPS guidelines for agreements.[49]

The staff recommended that the NPS improve communications with the Accokeek Foundation to help clear up these issues and to have the Interior Solicitor's Office evaluate the Foundation's funding operations and provide the park with guidance. Since the Ecosystem Farm was beyond the Accokeek Foundation's core National Colonial Farm area, park staff wanted to get that part of its operations under a five-year special use permit that would specify the type and extent of development allowable on that tract. They also wanted the NPS to deny the Foundation's request for a new water line and associated facilities until the Solicitor had approved it and the National Colonial Farm Development Concept Plan had been updated.[50]

---

[48] Draft memo, Stephen Syphax to Superintendent John Hale, subj: Accokeek Foundation Activities, April 21, 1998, NACE files: Accokeek Foundation, Accokeek Correspondence.
[49] Draft memo, Stephen Syphax to Superintendent John Hale, April 21, 1998; Syphax interview.
[50] Draft memo, Stephen Syphax to Superintendent John Hale, April 21, 1998.

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

Another major event that helped shape the park in recent years was the creation of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. As discussed earlier Captain John Smith explored and mapped the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers, interacting with the native peoples, to include the area that would become today's Piscataway Park. The two hundredth anniversary of his travels in 1607- 1608 prompted a series of commemorative events in the Chesapeake Bay region and launched the start of a national historic water trail in his name.[51]

The John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail was a series of water routes in the U.S. extending approximately 3,000 miles along the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and in Washington, DC. The route traced the historic voyages of Captain John Smith to chart the lands and waterways of the Chesapeake. After a year of feasibility studies by the NPS, bipartisan legislation to create the historic trail was introduced in the Senate in August 2005 and approved by the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks in May 2006. The Senate subcommittee's approval prompted a House companion bill. The House passed that bill on December 6, 2006, and the Senate passed it two days later. President George W. Bush signed the bill establishing this new park unit (P.L. 109-418) on December 19, 2006.[52]

While much of the public attention focused on recreating Smith's route, in the legislation creating the trail, Congress gave the NPS the mission of raising public awareness of Smith's interactions with native cultures. Though the image of Captain Smith traveling through untouched wilderness has long held romantic appeal, the NPS and its partners realize that that image does not adequately take into account complex indigenous societies that the Europeans encountered when they arrived. Still, the traditional and somewhat narrow colonial perspective that Smith provided in his travel journals persists. As Dr. Gabrielle Tayac from the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian explained, "What Smith actually saw were very complex and dynamic societies, with highly subtle agricultural practices, a complex religion and an interesting balance between men and women."[53]

---

[51] Lara Lutz, "Setting the Story Straight," *Bay Journal*, March 1, 2008, www.bayjournal.com/article/setting_the_story_straight, accessed May 13, 2016.
[52] "Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail," *Wikipedia*, accessed November 29, 2016.
[53] Lara Lutz, "Setting the Story Straight," *Bay Journal*, March 1, 2008, 6.

A second misconception was that the Chesapeake Bay's native inhabitants had abandoned the region many years earlier. Their communities were indeed diminished after the Europeans arrived due to death and migration, but other natives remained in their homeland and their communities survived. They often lived in rural enclaves and were excluded from white churches and schools. As noted earlier, in recent decades, the region's tribes have worked to reassert their identities and gain government recognition. Virginia now recognizes eight native tribes: the Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Upper Mattaponi, Monocan Indian Nation, Nansemond, Pamunkey, and Rapahannock. Delaware recognizes the Nanticoke. The Accohannock Indian Tribe, Cedarville Band of Piscataway Indians, Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians, Pocomoke Indians, Piscataway Indian Nation, and the Piscataway-Conoy Confederacy and Subtribes are based in Maryland and promote their heritage.[54]

Interpretation/Piscataway Cultural Landscape Initiative

The Accokeek Foundation and the Alice Ferguson Foundation have played a major role in the way the park's history and its natural and cultural resources are interpreted for visitors, each functioning independently of the other. By contrast, NPS involvement in interpretation inside the park has been more limited. The NPS maintained some wayside exhibits at Marshall Hall. It also helped fund and even design some of the interpretation media located elsewhere in the park, but it has had little influence on the interpretation at National Colonial Farm and other sites. With no NPS office inside the park and no daily onsite presence the bulk of the interpretation work has been and will continue to be done by its partners. Some NPS staff conceded that they would like to see greater representation of the NPS role inside the park and more NPS interpretation in the form of wayside exhibits. The NPS provides some funding and conducts occasional site visits related to interpretation, but it has not made interpretation a high priority in the park.[55]

In 2006 the Accokeek Foundation's board approved a new strategic plan that addressed its efforts related to interpretation. With this strategic plan it committed itself to developing, maintaining, and refining a comprehensive interpretive and education strategy that would reflect the needs and interests of the various participants in the park, including those of racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds. The plan was also designed to foster partnerships with local organizations to develop American Indian and African American interpretation.

---

[54] Ibid.
[55] Smith interview; Rosenstock interview.

At their board meeting in 2008, the Accokeek Foundation trustees decided to focus on three strategic initiatives. One was to develop long-term interpretive programming and exhibitions related to three cultures in southern Maryland (American Indian, European American, and African American), demonstrating how these groups interacted with each other and how they interacted with the land. Previous interpretative efforts had focused on interpreting European American heritage on National Colonial Farm. The Foundation hired a consultant to help develop its first interpretive plan, a plan that the board of trustees later approved.[56]

More recently the Accokeek Foundation concluded that its own interpretive programs needed to give greater attention to the important role of the Piscataway Indians in the region. In 2008 it added information about the presence of the Piscataway Indians and their interactions with the colonists to its existing programs. It also held special events highlighting American Indian women's issues and introduced hundreds of school children to American Indian cultures. The Accokeek Foundation and the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian formed an ongoing partnership to promote the interpretation of American Indian history and culture.[57]

In May 2008, the Accokeek Foundation convened a two-day American Indian scholarly colloquium with scholars of American Indian history in the Chesapeake region and representative of the three bands of Piscataway Indians. The purpose of the conference was to discuss how the Foundation could more effectively interpret Piscataway history and culture at the park, which encompassed their sacred homeland. Representatives of the three Piscataway bands and various scholars presented papers and discussed how to interpret the Piscataway experience in the region. Foundation President Hayes observed that the colloquium marked the first time that representatives of the three Piscataway bands were in the same room, calling it a "momentous" occasion. At the end of the first day of the meeting, some participants to include one of the Foundation's board members, Dr. Gabrielle Tayac, the granddaughter of Chief Turkey Tayac, visited his grave. Participants left the conference with a stronger commitment to work together to expand their efforts and make sure that the park's interpretive materials and programs reflected the culture of the Piscataway people, past and present.[58]

After the conference, the Accokeek Foundation began working with local Piscataway tribal members on a project that it called the Piscataway Cultural Landscape Initiative, a major effort to "create a national

---

[56] "Narrative – Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park," n.d., NACE files: PISC-AF IMLS Proposal.
[57] Lutz, "Piscataway Park's role evolved from saving a view to sharing a point of view."
[58] "Narrative – Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park" n.d., NACE files: PISC-AF IMLS Proposal; Hayes interview.

model in Piscataway Park of connecting people to the environment through interpretation of the indigenous cultural landscape of the Piscataway people." The NPS was a key partner to the Accokeek Foundation in this effort. One impact of the initiative was reflected in the fact that the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail has identified indigenous cultural landscapes as a central interpretive theme.[59]

As part of the Accokeek Foundation's efforts to promote community engagement and the Piscataway Cultural Landscape Initiative, in 2010 Hayes secured a small grant to conduct an oral history project related to the Piscataway Indians, which focused on the Piscataway's contemporary connection to the land. Based on that project, the Foundation developed a traveling exhibit called Piscataway Connections. The initiative had broad outreach to the Piscataway. Hayes emphasized that the Accokeek Foundation's board remains committed to telling the Piscataway story because the board members understand its great significance. Some tensions still exist within the Piscataway community, she conceded, but the Accokeek Foundation has been able to navigate those issues successfully. It continues to allow the Piscataway Nation and the Piscataway/Conoy tribe and subtribes to use the National Colonial Farm site, and the Tayac family holds ceremonies there several times a year.[60] Though the interpretation of the Piscataway history and culture in the area has improved, some Piscataway would like to see the Accokeek Foundation and the NPS interpretation better reflect the evolving nature of their culture.[61]

On January 9, 2012, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley signed executive orders giving state recognition to the Piscataway Indian Nation, the Piscataway Conoy Confederacy and Subtribes, and the Cedarville Band of Piscataway. To date there has been no federal recognition. The Accokeek Foundation continues to seek ways to honor the Piscataway history and culture and its efforts to incorporate the concept of the "indigenous cultural landscape" into its interpretation.[62]

Accokeek Foundation President Hayes emphasized the importance of preserving the landscape and communicating the importance of that landscape, particularly the importance of the land to the Piscataway people. The landscape's significance as an "iconic view," she said, was well understood and

---

[59] "Narrative – Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park"; Virginia Busby, Interview by Janet McDonnell, August 3. 2017; Dr. Lisa Hayes, "Piscataway Park: A Landscape of the Potomac," *Living Landscape Observer*, accessed on May 13, 2016 at Http://livinglandscapeobserver.net/piscataway/.
[60] Hayes interview.
[61] Rico Newman, interview by author, July 21, 2017.
[62] "Narrative – Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park;" "Piscataway Cultural Landscape," http://accokeekfoundation.org/education/piscatway-cultural-landscape/, accessed May 9, 2016.

the various partners, such as the NPS, MVLA, the Maryland Environmental Trust, the planning staffs in two counties, and other national and regional conservation groups, continued to work to preserve that landscape. Less understood, she added, was the landscape's significance to the Piscataway people.[63]

The park's own relationship with its Piscataway partners has at times proved challenging but that relationship has continued to improve in recent years. The park has to interact with the Piscataway as a traditionally associated people without the protection of some of the laws that apply to federally recognized tribes.[64] At one point Alexcy (Alex) Romero, NACE superintendent from 2009 to 2013, met with Piscataway Chief Billy Tayac who conveyed the powerful connection that the Piscataway people had, and continue to have, to the park and their view of the land at Chief Turkey Tayac's gravesite and the surrounding area as sacred space. Romero came away from his meeting with Billy Tayac more determined to preserve that connection and strengthen the relationship between the NPS and the Piscataway and more committed to improving access for the Piscataway. He worked with on a plan to provide greater access to the gravesite through the Alice Ferguson Foundation property. During his tenure, the NPS turned over management of the access through the Hard Bargain Farm gates to the Foundation.[65] As an indicator of the sacred nature and significance of the gravesite not just for the Piscataway but for American Indians more generally, visitors to the gravesite can see a cluster of items carefully laid out on top of the grave and the frame of a sweat lodge nearby. Native peoples from around the country leave small gifts, such as treasured photos, tobacco, a flag, and a baseball glove, as a way of honoring and celebrating Chief Turkey Tayac. [66]

Another Accokeek Foundation initiative called Piscataway Park Cultural Conversations focused not only on integrating the interpretation of American Indian culture, but also African American, history and culture into all aspects of the visitor experience at the park.[67] The Accokeek Foundation's interpretation of African American history and culture at National Colonial Farm remained a concern. Until recent years, the Accokeek Foundation's interpretation of African American history at the farm had taken two forms – a living history/performance and an annual African American Heritage Day. When the Foundation developed the interpretive narrative of National Colonial Farm after extensive research, the scholar

---

[63] Hayes, "Piscataway Park: A Landscape of the Potomac," *Living Landscape Observer.*
[64] Jenny Masur, "Working with Traditionally Associated Groups: A Form of Civic Engagement," *George Wright Forum* 26, no. 3, 2009, 91.
[65] Romero interview.
[66] Newman interview.
[67] Email, Lisa Hayes to Alex Romero, January 14, 2016, NACE files: PISC-AF IMLS Proposal.

consultants recommended interpreting the experiences and perspective of a middling tobacco planter landowner, as opposed to a tenant farmer, since the landowner would have owned a slave. This would give them an opportunity to interpret slavery for the visitors. However, the Foundation's main mechanism for addressing African American culture continues to be African American Heritage Day. It has come to understand that it needs to do more, to tell the African American story throughout the year, not just one day.[68] The Accokeek Foundation's effort to improve its interpretation of the African American history and experience continues, as does its effort to draw more African American visitors to National Colonial Farm.[69]

Environmental Assessment (2009)

By the early 2000s, increased recreational and semi-formal educational activities, storms, and aging had taken a toll on the trails, footbridges, boardwalks, and other facilities throughout the park. Stakeholders and park visitors also raised concerns about the decaying condition of the wooden footbridge, boardwalks, observation deck, and trails across the Accokeek Creek Marsh. Visitors complained about the lack of adequate seating for elderly visitors and school groups. Another issue was the rapid erosion of the shoreline between Accokeek Creek and Mockley Point that threatened the cultural and natural resources in the area.

In July 2008, the NPS released a public notice informing all interested parties that the park intended to develop an environmental assessment (EA) that would assess the potential effects of repairing/improving visitor accommodations and stabilizing the shoreline at the park. At their internal initial scoping meetings, NPS staff identified several major issues and concerns related to park natural resources, cultural resources, and visitor use. The shoreline along Mockley Point was rapidly eroding and adversely affecting the area's natural resources, such as soils, water quality, vegetation, and wildlife. The rapidly eroding Mockley Point shoreline also threatened irreplaceable archeological and historical resources. Finally, the current visitor accommodations were old and in need of improvements, and they were inadequate for expected future uses. The loss of natural and cultural resources affected the interpretive qualities of these resources.[70]

---

[68] "Narrative – Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park."
[69] Hayes interview.
[70] Ibid., 8-9.

In 2009, the NPS moved forward with its proposal to repair and enhance visitor accommodations in the park in response to deteriorating infrastructure in order to meet the current and future visitor demand and to stabilize shoreline to protect the park's cultural and natural resources. It completed an EA in 2009, which covered the fee land, inside the park boundaries, but not the land held in scenic easements.[71]

The proposed improvements to the visitor facilities and the protection of the park's resources were important for a number of reasons. For example, over time the existing Accokeek Creek Marsh boardwalk had become severely damaged due to storms, aging, and weathering, and had "reached the end of its useable service life." The Accokeek Creek trail needed repairs and upgrades. Shoreline erosion along Mockley Point was causing the loss of natural and cultural resources. The existing primitive canoe launch made it difficult to enter and exit canoes and caused erosion along the bank. Finally, there was a lack of interpretive media throughout the park and a need to prepare for anticipated increases in the number of visitors.[72]

The 2009 NPS EA evaluated two proposed alternatives. The first proposed action included repairing and improving the deteriorating and outdated visitor accommodations as well as the Accokeek Creek parking area, trails, and boardwalk. It also included stabilizing the eroding shoreline along Mockley Point to protect the park's natural and cultural resources, installing a floating canoe dock; and increasing the amount of interpretive media throughout the park. The second alternative, no action, involved maintaining the current layout, condition, and management of the park. If this alternative was selected, the NPS would respond to future needs and maintain the current condition of visitor accommodations and eroding shoreline as needed. The EA then evaluated the impacts of each of these proposed actions in accordance with the NPS Director's Order #12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making.[73]

The assessment then outlined in detail the measures the NPS planned to take in order to mitigate the impact of implementing alternative B. The EA noted that the NPS would implement an appropriate level of monitoring through the construction or demolition to help ensure that protective measures were properly and successfully implemented. Then, it detailed the potential impact of the project on soils,

[71] Ibid., i, 1.
[72] Ibid., 4.
[73] Ibid., 19.

water quality, vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, and visitor use and experience.[74]

The 1980s era wooden boardwalk that spanned the Accokeek Creek marsh from the asphalt trail near the gravel parking lot off Bryan Point Road and north towards the Piscataway Indian burial site was badly in need of repair. NACE had been requesting funds for reconstructing the boardwalk through the Accokeek Creek marsh and swamp for several years and finally received them. Under the NPS project supervisor, in 2010 the contractor, Garcete Construction, replaced rotted pilings, stringers, and decking. The new boardwalk would keep the same footprint of the old one but would have railings compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act 201 standards for accessible design.[75]

A major impetus for constructing a boardwalk through the Accokeek Creek marsh was to provide the Piscataways with more effective access across federal land rather than having to pass through the Alice Ferguson Foundation's Hard Bargain property, but the boardwalk quickly became one of the most popular visitor sites in the park. Rosenstock observed that more people use the boardwalk than any other feature in the park because of the scenic view and the exposure to important wetlands. As hoped, the boardwalk greatly improved access for the Piscataway, particularly for the elderly and physically challenged.[76]

Environmental Assessment (2012)

In 2012, the NPS proposed to support the Alice Ferguson Foundation by providing planning assistance and funding for several capital improvement projects and repairs at the Alice Ferguson Foundation's Hard Bargain Farm. The Alice Ferguson Foundation was drawing more than 8,000 school students and educators to the park each year for environmental field studies and investigations. The goal of the project was to improve accommodations for existing and growing visitor and program needs at the Foundation's facilities. The EA in 2012 analyzed two alternatives. Alternative A was to take no action and alternative B provided for new development. Under alternative B, the NPS would support the design and construction of innovative, energy efficient, and sustainable classroom, additional parking, overnight facilities, and a

[74] Ibid., 34-36.
[75] Karen Miles, "Boardwalk Across Accokeek Creek Wetland in Construction Phase," *Hard Bargain News*, October 2010, http://fergusonfoundation.org/newsletters/ accessed February 7, 2017.
[76] Syphax interview; Rosenstock interview; Newman interview.

wetland boardwalk. With alternative A the site would be managed in the same manner as currently and the current configuration of the site would remain unchanged.[77]

The proposed project would provide new overnight accommodations and support facilities, as well as additional parking on the site. The proposed facilities would be innovative, energy-efficient designs using environmentally sensitive and sustainable materials. The design would include systems to monitor and measure energy consumption/conservation at the new facilities and would be incorporated into future programs to educate visitor about sustainable building and living. The project was needed because the current facilities required upgrades and improvements to meet current and future visitor and program needs. The Alice Ferguson Foundation Overnight Lodge for its guests, called the Wareham Lodge, needed replacement because of persistent moisture and mold problems.[78]

The NPS had a long history of cooperation with Alice Ferguson Foundation. Recall that the Alice Ferguson Foundation's original land donation to NPS when the park was created included the condition that the Alice Ferguson Foundation would retain the right to use its land for activities consistent with the NPS mission and its own educational mission. The 1963 cooperative agreement between the two organizations formalized the relationship and provided additional details, including a requirement for the NCR regional director's approval for various activities, such as new development and capital improvements, on the otherwise private property. Section 3, Part E stated: "No additional buildings, structures, or other physical facilities shall be constructed on said lands by the Alice Ferguson Foundation, Inc., without first obtaining written approval of the Regional Director of the National Capital Region, National Park Service."

The NPS and the Alice Ferguson Foundation had signed a scenic easement on February 14, 1968. Section 8 of this agreement gave the Alice Ferguson Foundation the authority to erect such buildings as required in connection with its education and community interests. It stipulated that the existing farm building may remain or new farm buildings erected if needed to further the Foundation's educational and agricultural program. The Secretary of the Interior or his representative would have to approve the location and type of new buildings in writing before construction. With this history in mind, the Alice Ferguson Foundation had developed plans to undertake several capital improvement projects on their

---

[77] NACE, *Development of Energy Efficient Visitor Center and Student Educational Facilities at the Alice Ferguson Foundation's Hard Bargain Environmental Center in the Scenic Easement of Piscataway Park*, *Environmental Assessment,* May 2012, 5.
[78] Ibid.

property that was under scenic easement. The NPS provided funding and planning support for these projects. Because of the use of federal funds and the requirement that the Foundation secure NPS approval for any proposed development, the proposed development on this otherwise privately-owned property required NEPA adherence and thus an EA.[79]

The Alice Ferguson Foundation had hosted a three-day planning meeting in November 2006. The design team included nationally renowned green design firms. Using an integrative design process they created buildings that would have a positive, regenerative effect on the local environment. The plan included broad public outreach and stakeholder involvement, and the final design reflected their input. A letter went out to all adjacent landowners on September 12, 2011, announcing the review of a Special Exception to the Development Review Division of The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Later that month, there was an informational meeting about the Potomac Watershed Study Center with project team members available to answer questions.[80]

Because the project was located on what was private property (Hard Bargain Farm) inside Piscataway Park boundaries that was covered by a scenic easement with the NPS, the Maryland Historical Trust reviewed the project for its effects on historic properties pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended. According to the materials the NPS submitted in May and June 2012, the project involved the construction of new interpretive and overnight accommodations, support facilities, and associated onsite parking at the Alice Ferguson Foundation's Hard Bargain Farm Environmental Center. It included the following: a new day-use building and associated amenities; a new overnight lodge and associated amenities; a wetland boardwalk to replace the old trail, including a bridge over Accokeek Creek; and new parking area, walkways, and utilities to support the Grass and Moss building facilities.[81]

The Alice Ferguson Foundation conducted phase I archeological investigations of areas slated for construction as part of this project, which were documented in "A Phase I Archeological Investigation of the Proposed Potomac River Habitat Study Complex at Hard Bargain Farm Environmental Center Property, Prince George's County, Maryland" (Tyler et. al. 2009). The survey identified two archeological sites within the project's vicinity: site 18PR962 (Hard Bargain Farm Center) and site 18PR963 (Hard Bargain Farm Footpath). Both sites contained scatters of prehistoric artifacts and indicated use of the

[79] Ibid., 6.
[80] Ibid., 13.
[81] Memo, Beth Cole, Maryland Department of Planning, Maryland Historical Trust, to Karen Jensen Miles, Alice Ferguson Foundation, June 19, 2012, NACE files.

area during the Woodland Period. The exact function, size, and significance of the sites remained unexamined. If those sites would be impacted, Beth Cole of the Maryland Historical Trust observed, further phase II investigations had to be conducted to determine the eligibility of these sites for the National Register of Historic Places. [82]

The assessment found that the proposed project would have no impact on site 8PR963. The northeastern portion of site 18PR962 partially extended to the area slated for the Grass Building, but the phase I survey found that this portion of the site contained few artifacts and had already been disturbed. The assessment directed the Alice Ferguson Foundation to avoid any ground disturbance in the remaining sensitive portions of 18PR962. Thus based on the available information the Trust concurred that the construction of the various actions included in the Potomac Watershed Study Center would have "no adverse effect" on the historical and archeological properties provided the Alice Ferguson Foundation ensured that archeological site 18PR963 and the western portion of 18PR962 were avoided by all construction-related ground disturbances, activities, and equipment. The Foundation also had to provide site protection and avoidance with temporary fencing during the construction.

In August 2012, NACE Superintendent Romero formally approved a FONSI for the development of energy efficient visitor and student education facilities at the Hard Bargain Farm Environmental Center in the scenic easement of Piscataway Park. The NPS approved several capital improvements and repairs to various structures on property owned by the Alice Ferguson Foundation within the scenic easements of the park. The project would improve facilities and accommodations for the Alice Ferguson Foundation's existing and growing visitor and program needs by constructing new classrooms, new overnight facilities, a new wetland boardwalk, and other support facilities at the Environmental Center. To satisfy the terms of the scenic easement, the NPS had prepared an environmental assessment to evaluate the proposed project. This FONSI would now serve as written approval by the Secretary of the Interior's representative, the NCR director, for the Foundation to build the proposed project within the scenic easement.[83]

As a result of the environmental assessment, the NPS had to review some elements more closely, such as the plan for handling the demand for parking while at the same time preserving the trees. It was a major construction project, and park staff expressed concern about how the project would affect visitors

[82] Ibid.
[83] NPS, NCP-E, "Finding of No Significant Impact, Development of energy efficient visitor and student education facilities at the Hard Bargain Farm Environment Center," signed August 9, 2012, file: signed_FONSI.pdf.

coming to the park. The volume of tree removal to be considered took up more park staff time than anticipated.[84]

The Hard Bargain Farm Environmental Center currently uses innovative learning techniques to teach environmental studies to roughly 5,000 elementary school students a year on their 330-acre working farm along the banks of the Potomac. For many of these students it is a rare opportunity to experience the operations of a working farm and in the process have direct personal contact with nature. Also reflecting the Alice Ferguson Foundation's environmental focus, in the mid to late 1990s the Foundation initiated, in partnership with the NPS and regional school systems, the "Bridging the Watershed" program, a science driven environmental education program for students. The program involved going out into parks to conduct modules on various environmental topics. The program was in eight parks within National Capital Region initially and later expanded to some state parks.[85]

Preservation and Protection of Cultural and Natural Resources

Preservation and protection of the park's cultural resources, such as its historic structures and archeological sites, remained a high priority for the NPS. In 1992 the NPS developed a proposal to expand the boat facilities at Marshall Hall. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources had some concerns about the potential effect of these changes on the Mount Vernon viewshed. Maryland's deputy SHPO asked the NPS to provide the documentation supporting its finding of no adverse effect and copies of the comments it had received from the Maryland SHPO and the MVLA.[86] The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation concurred with the park service's determination. However, the Council's support was contingent on the NPS meeting the conditions set forth in the August 25, 1992 letter from the Maryland SHPO and the determination of the Virginia SHPO that the project would not adversely affect Mount Vernon.[87]

Piscataway Park indeed contains some of the most significant archeological resources in the lower Potomac River valley. Recent decades have brought both advances and challenges in protecting the park's rich archeological resources. As noted earlier, archeologists have been conducting investigations in

---

[84] Rosenstock interview.
[85] Angela Barnes, "Hundreds of Area Students Impacted by Federal Shutdown and Closure of National Parks," October 8, 2013, http://Accokeekfoundation.org/hundreds-of-area-students-impacted-by-federal-shutdown, accessed May 9, 2016; Miles interview.
[86] H. Bryan Mitchell to Robert Stanton, NCR RD, May 19, 1992, NPS PHP PISC.
[87] Don L. Klima to Robert Stanton, October 29, 1992, NPS PHP PISC.

the park for more than 100 years. The quality of those archeological investigations varied and only a fraction produced written reports, but during this period the NPS had systematically assembled the known sites from all surveys and excavations in the Archeological Sites Management Information System (ASMIS) database.

The improvements proposed in the 2009 EA fell in an area that was relatively well documented so it was possible to outline a fairly comprehensive inventory of the existing archeological resources by references to available reports, the park's ASMIS records, and other sources. Regional Archeologist Dr. Stephen Potter has prepared the most comprehensive summary of prior archeology work. The rapidly eroding portion of the shoreline between Accokeek Creek and Mockley Point contained a number of important sites, including the Mockley Point Site, the Accokeek Creek Site Complex, and the Chief Turkey Tayac burial site. Because these areas were being lost through erosion, and the actions proposed to stabilize the shoreline would protect against any further loss, archeological resources was highlighted as an impact topic in the 2009 Environmental Assessment mentioned earlier.[88]

Preservation and protection of the park's rich natural resources was equally important. The diverse and complex natural environments that make up the park (e.g. meadows, mixed upland forests, bottomland woods, and swamps, tidal and non-tidal wetlands) provide habitat to a diverse plant and animal community. Species of wildlife include red fox, gray squirrel, opossum, raccoon, groundhog (or woodchuck), muskrat, beaver, otter, and white-tailed deer. The wetlands and forests are home to many species of amphibians and reptiles. The park has little information on the status of animal populations within the park. It has relied largely on observations made by staff and visitors. A significant white-tailed deer population exists in the park and poaching remains a problem.[89]

An abundance of waterfowl species uses the coves and backwater areas along the shore as stopovers during their migrations. Waterfowl hunting is legal along much of the shore, and is under the jurisdiction of the state of Maryland. The park does maintain some control over the areas where hunting is allowed through a Cooperative Wildlife Management Agreement with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

---

[88] NPS, NACE, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment,* July 2009, 10, 47.
[89] "Statement for Management, Piscataway Park," rev. January 1992, NACE files: Legislative History.

Given the park's mandate to protect the viewshed, trees have always been a particularly important natural resource. Roughly two-thirds, or about 220 acres, of the park is eastern deciduous hardwood forest. Dominant species include oaks, tulip poplars, maples, flowering dogwoods, and paw paw. There has always been a problem with property owners cutting down trees without permission but the problem of losing trees to infestation and disease was also a concern. The NPS undertook its first gypsy moth suppression actions during spring 1993. In recent years, the emerald ash borer has been killing the pumpkin ash in the park, as well as other park units in the region, and remains a grave concern for the NPS and its partners. One of the issues that the park has to address is looking at the function of a tree, its location, and the language of the easement, rather than simply looking at its species. Though she recognized and shared the serious concerns about addressing invasive tree species, Superintendent Smith's priority was managing the viewshed. She maintained that the height of the tree and the coverage that the tree provides as well as its ecological function could at times be more important than its specific species. [90]

As highlighted in the 2009 EA, soil erosion remained another major concern for the NPS and its partners. Erosion has long been a serious issue at a number of locations along the Potomac's Maryland shore. The problem has grown in recent years with the encroachment of suburban development and the failure to deal adequately with storm water. Soil erosion presented a major threat to both cultural and natural resources. These unstable areas created a safety hazard for visitors and boaters and sometimes resulted in the loss of important archeological resources. For example, the shoreline along the Alice Ferguson Foundation's Hard Bargain Farm had suffered significant erosion for some time. A roughly 90-degree bend in the Potomac River at Mockley Point exacerbated the problem by carving more forcefully into the shore.

Over time the river has become wider and increasingly shallow and shoreline erosion upstream from the Tayac gravesite toward Mockley Point was having a severe impact on the area. Alice Ferguson Foundation staff and guests found it increasingly difficult to reach their canoe site on the shore of Piscataway Bay at Mockley Point. A dirt and gravel road built too close to the shoreline was at risk of falling into the river and the NPS would have to relocate it. To complicate matters, in the 1970s the WSSC had installed a controversial nine-foot diameter pipeline that ran from the Piscataway water treatment plant through Hard Bargain Farm and released its effluent out into the river at an opening on NPS property just above

[90] Smith interview, 8; Hayes interview; Romero interview.

the Tayac gravesite. The WSSC had piled up rip rap (large rocks) around the opening but the erosion continued.[91]

As the shoreline erosion continued, the Alice Ferguson Foundation turned to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other federal agencies for help. NOAA suggested using a unique approach called living shoreline to address the erosion. The living shoreline approach was an effective method of arresting shoreline erosion without using the traditional practice of digging into the existing shoreline. It involved using used rip rap (large rocks) but instead of placing the rip rap right at the erosion point in the more traditional fashion, the rip rap was built up further out in the water, up to the height of high tide. Specifically, the contractor started the stabilization away from the shoreline, laying rip rap further out in the river and then filled in the area behind the barrier and planted inside it, so it was not a hardened shoreline. It was installed without digging into the existing shore. There were breaks in the rip rap so that small tidal pools formed instead of a straight line of stone down the shoreline. The gaps for these tidal pools were staggered in order to make the shoreline a little more varied.

The Alice Ferguson Foundation spearheaded the living shoreline project and pushed it vigorously. Since the erosion project was on NPS land, the NPS played a support role and collaborated closely with the Foundation. Karen Jensen Miles from the Foundation took the lead for this project worked as its onsite representative. The Foundation facilitated conversations between the NPS and NOAA, as well as with the Army Corps of Engineers and MVLA. In January 2006, the Chesapeake Bay Trust awarded a grant to the Alice Ferguson Foundation to begin making plans for stabilizing the shoreline between Accokeek Creek and Mockley Point. Though the Chesapeake Bay Trust provided that initial grant, later the federal government, specifically NOAA provided much of the funding. The Alice Ferguson Foundation continued to maintain a presence and acted as the fiduciary agent for the project.[92]

In February 2006, representatives from the NPS, Alice Ferguson Foundation, NOAA, and the Chesapeake Bay Trust met to discuss the Chesapeake Bay Trust grant. The project partners discussed the planning, potential design constraints, and the contractor selected for the project. They all agreed that protecting the site was a high priority. The initial survey of the site was completed in April 2006, and the initial designs for the stabilization project were completed that summer. [93]

---

[91] Syphax interview; Hayes interview; Rosenstock interview; Miles interview.
[92] Rosenstock interview; Miles interview; Romero interview.
[93] NPS, NCP-E, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment,* July 2009, 4-5, 8.

Knowing that the project would have a temporary but nonetheless significant impact on the Piscataway's access to the archeological remains of the village, the ossuary, and Chief Turkey Tayac's gravesite, Miles and NPS staff met with Billy Tayac to explain the proposed project and get his perspective. There were a number of issues related to compliance and environmental assessment and construction, and the project took a couple years. The Alice Ferguson Foundation and the NPS had to ensure that the project would not have a negative impact on the viewshed. At one point Miles stood across the river at Mount Vernon and Rosenstock at Fort Washington, each with binoculars, to make sure that they could not spot any of the red balloons that were being raised at the project site to test its visibility.[94]

On a sunny day, October 12, 2010, approximately 100 persons gathered along the Maryland shoreline of the Potomac across from Mount Vernon to celebrate the completion of the construction phase of the living shoreline restoration project at Piscataway Park. Representative Steny Hoyer (MD) spoke of the project's importance and NPS Director Jonathan Jarvis spoke of the importance of conserving our natural resources. Alice Ferguson Foundation Director Tracy Bowen credited the partnership between the Alice Ferguson Foundation, NOAA, NPS, Chesapeake Bay Trust, and the Keith Campbell Foundation for the success of this project. The impact of the project on the shoreline and the marshes, which contain valuable archeological resources, has been positive and the erosion has subsided to a degree. [95]

When completed, the living shoreline project at Piscataway Park, designed with habitat enhancement and locally native plantings, created some interesting and naturally appearing beach areas that later became destinations for visitors. It served as a rip rap allowing water to flow in and out, rather than a rigid sea wall, with a strip of sandy beach between the rocks and the shore.[96]

Visitor Use and Experience

Concerns about visitor use and the quality of the visitor experience have continued in recent decades. The 2009 NPS environmental assessment for Piscataway Park discussed earlier reported that visitor use and the visitor experience was being negatively affected by the deteriorating visitor accommodations and natural and cultural resources within the park, to include degraded trails, inadequate parking, shoreline erosion, and subsequent loss of cultural resources. The 2009 EA went on to recommend an alternative that would have beneficial impacts on visitor use and the visitor experience by improving visitor

---

[94] Miles interview; Rosenstock interview.
[95] Karen Miles, "Piscataway Park Living Shoreline Restoration Celebration," *Hard Bargain News*, October 2010, http://fergusonfoundation.org/newsletters/ accessed February 7, 2017.
[96] Syphax interview; Smith interview; Miles interview.

accommodations, preserving the shoreline, and installing new interpretive media. As we have seen, some of these measures to include a new visitor center and boardwalk were later adopted and had a positive impact.[97]

During the period 1993 to 2007, roughly three million recreational visitors came to Piscataway Park, with an average annual visitation rate of approximately 197,000 a year. Visitor accommodations included two portable comfort stations, a public fishing pier, two boardwalks that extended over fresh water tidal wetlands, and four hiking trails. Visitor activities included picnicking, wildlife and bird watching, fishing, canoeing, and interpreting the cultural significance of the site. As noted, the Alice Ferguson Foundation remains one of the most active park users, bringing more than 8,000 students and educators into the park each year for environmental field studies and investigations from its private land adjoining the park.[98]

Overall visitation to the park, however, has declined in recent years. The number of visitors dropped from 270,008 in 1990 to 201,177 in 2000, and finally to 123,301in 2016.[99] Many of the park's visitors come to experience the National Colonial Farm; others came to fish, hike, picnic, and explore. A much smaller number visit the Ecosystem Farm, which had been intentionally set away from the visitor center and never designed as a tourist attraction. That decision, Wilton Corkern explained, was probably a mistake because since 1990 organic gardening, sustainable agriculture, and other initiatives have taken on greater public interest. Visitation to National Colonial Farm specifically has remained steady in recent years, averaging from 25,000 to 30,000 people a year.[100]

Visitor use of other park areas has remained relatively modest. Most current visitors are local residents who come to fish, picnic, or visit National Colonial Farm and Hard Bargain Farm. Most of those who come to the park to fish are residents of the area and frequent docks or riverbank sites at Marshall Hall, Saylor Grove, and Wharf Road. On many weekdays busloads of school children come to Saylor Grove to enjoy their bag lunches and local residents picnicked in the park. Hard Bargain Farm did not provide programs for the general public, though tours could be arranged in advance. Some visitors come to use the

---

[97] NPS, NACE, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment,* July 2009, 11.
[98] Ibid., 50-51.
[99] www.IRMA.nps.gov/Stats/SSRReports, Piscataway Park, accessed March 14, 2017.
[100] Corkern interview; Hayes interview.

Marshall Hall boat dock, managed by the Charles County Commissioners in a three-way agreement with the NPS and the Maryland DNR. [101]

The 1916 Organic Act establishing the NPS made it clear that each unit of the National Park System has an inherent value with or without visitors, but also that the NPS also has a responsibility to connect people with their parks. Looking at Piscataway Park specifically, former Director Stanton observed that there is a strong sentiment to retain the quiet rural character of the park, to include the narrow two-lane roads such as Bryan Point Road. The park is not promoted as much as it might be in part because increased visitation could affect this rural character and because the existing infrastructure cannot support it. If you increase visitor access, he explained, you must be able to accommodate those visitors with roads, surface parking, restrooms, hiking trails and other infrastructure. This requires additional resources that will probably not be available. [102]

Challenges Ahead

Preserving the Mount Vernon viewshed continues to require close cooperation between the NPS and its various partners and stakeholders as it has for decades. Standing on the piazza at Mount Vernon today looking out over the Potomac River to the Maryland shore, it is easy to see that the viewshed extends well beyond the boundaries of Piscataway Park, but the park land remains the viewshed's critical core. In 2013 the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Prince George's County Planning Department published a major study of the Mount Vernon viewshed called "Conserving Significant Cultural Landscapes: Protecting the Piscataway and Accokeek Historic Communities and the Mount Vernon Viewshed." This study identified what it called the "Area of Primary Concern" for conservation purposes, an area covering roughly 28,000 acres of land in Prince George's and Charles counties, as well as parts of the Potomac River shoreline in Fairfax County, Virginia. It made recommendations for preserving the cultural landscape of the rural communities of Piscataway and Accokeek, which are a particularly important portion of the viewshed across the Potomac River from Mount Vernon. The study noted that as seen from the Mount Vernon piazza, the Piscataway-Accokeek area had remained largely unchanged since the 18th century, though development was increasingly threatening the cultural and historic integrity of the area. The study's recommendations focused on

[101] "Statement for Management, Piscataway Park," rev. 1/92; Rosenstock interview.
[102] Stanton interview.

facilitating appropriate land development in two rural and historic communities so as to maintain and conserve the tree canopy coverage within the "Area of Primary Concern."[103]

The MVLA's practice of buying up private land along the Maryland shore to preserve what it refers to simply as "The Viewshed," a practice begun by Representative Frances Bolton in the 1950s, continues to this day. In recent years, the MVLA has purchased several tracts of land along the river on the Maryland side with the goal of re-selling those tracts so as to ensure their conservation. However, MVLA leaders are quick to point out that they cannot protect every tract of land in the viewshed with their limited funds and their other responsibilities. The threats to the viewshed continue, MVLA Chief of Staff Megan Dunn observed, and it is important that the park and its partners and supporters remain vigilant.[104] In 2005 MVLA purchased an 18th century house and 73 shoreline acres from Mr. and Mrs. Grima Johnson to prevent that land from falling into the hands of developers. Over the next few years it then sold the home and ten of the 73 acres to Tim and Liz Cullen. MVLA worked with the Trust for Public Land and the NPS to create strong easements on the Cullen property, to appraise the remaining land and to determine a fair market price for the 63 acres that the MVLA continued to own.[105]

Preserving the viewshed is the park's legislative mandate and remains the park's primary concern, but the park also faces increasing challenges related to climate change, particularly the impact of climate change on its rich natural and cultural resources. In 2013 the NPS published a detailed study of climate change and its impact on 27 national park units in the Washington, DC area, to include Piscataway Park. The NPS launched this study so that it could better integrate climate change into its resource management planning and operations. The report laid out the results of the original analyses of historical and projected climate change and a summary of published scientific findings on the impacts related to climate change. It noted that from 1946 to 2012 the temperature at the nearby Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport weather station had shown a statistically significant increase and that the mean sea level at the NOAA tidal gauge on the southwest Washington waterfront revealed a statistically significant rise from 1931 to

[103] Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Prince George's County Planning Department, "Conserving Significant Cultural Landscapes: Protecting the Piscataway and Accokeek Historic Communities and the Mount Vernon Viewshed," March 12, 2013, 1, 5.
[104] Dunn interview; Romero interview.
[105] MVLA, "Protecting the Mount Vernon Viewshed," prepared 2005 updated 2016, from Megan Dunn; "Deed of Easement," Thomas F. Cullen, Jr., and Elizabeth Davis Cullen and Trust for Public Land, January 8, 2008; Dunn interview.

2013.[106] Climate change will continue to have a significant impact on the park's cultural and natural resources and on visitation.

Also critical to the future of this park and many other park units is the NPS's ability to maintain, manage, and strengthen its relationships with its partners and stakeholders. These relationships have become increasingly important with the NPS's limited resources. In its 2006 *Management Policies* the NPS asked parks to embrace civic engagement as a fundamental practice. The NPS was committing itself to building and sustaining relationships with park neighbors and other communities of interest. This also involved a continuous, dynamic conversation with the public designed to reinforce the commitment of the NPS and its partners to preserving park resources.[107] The history of Piscataway Park reflects both the benefits and the challenges of such partnerships.

Bob Stanton, whose experience working with the Accokeek Foundation and the other park partners over the years was very positive, emphasized that the interest and integrity of the individuals who constitute these partnerships is critical. He highlighted the importance of interpersonal relationships, a shared sense of dedication, shared goals, and a commitment to developing a common agenda. Like many others, he stressed the importance of effective communication. He noted that with the current and most likely future resource constraints the NPS will most likely have to rely even more on partnerships in the future. He viewed this as a positive trend because these partnerships get people more engaged in their parks, as long as the partnerships include strict financial accountability.[108]

Current and former NPS officials readily acknowledge the important role that partnerships have played at Piscataway Park but also concede that there is room for improvement in the park service's and the park's relationships with its partners. The task of creating and sustaining effective partnerships is no easy task as we have seen, particularly since beyond their shared commitment to preserving the viewshed, the various partners have different missions, objectives, and priorities. The park has had some of these partnerships since the 1950s and 1960s, but it has not always paid adequate attention to those partner relationships for a variety of reasons. At times, the partners might have placed greater attention on those relationships than the NPS, and this dynamic might have worked to their benefit. Superintendent Smith

---

[106] Patrick Gonzalez, Jr., *Climate Change and Impacts for the National Parks of Washington, D.C., USA*, March 23, 2013.
[107] Jenny Masur, "Working with Traditionally Associated Groups: A Form of Civic Engagement," *George Wright Forum* 26, no. 3, 2009, 85; See NPS, *Management Policies 2006*, Https://www.nps.gov/policy/MP2006.pdf, accessed March 30, 2017.
[108] Stanton interview.

fully recognized that managing the park was about managing relationships, which was a constant and ongoing process. "If you don't manage relationships," she cautioned, "the relationships will manage you." Along with Stanton, she emphasized the importance of good communication in maintaining effective relationships with its partners.[109]

Both the Accokeek Foundation and the Alice Ferguson Foundation members take their stewardship role in the park very seriously and take pride in being willing partners to the NPS, but they have at times become frustrated with what they perceive as bureaucratic delays and funding issues and the frequent turnover of NPS personnel. Although some of these partners indicated that they understood that the NPS has limited resources that it can contribute in the form of funding and personnel, it is difficult for them to fully understand NPS processes and requirements, as well its funding and staffing constraints.[110]

Former Accokeek Foundation President Wilton Corkern observed that the interpersonal relationships between its current president, Lisa Hayes, the park superintendent, and the regional staff have been good, but the institutional relationships were not always as good as they might have been. Corkern noted that at times the NPS has embraced the Accokeek Foundation as the steward of the property and this has worked well, but on other occasions when it has not the results have been less successful.[111]

Hayes emphasized that the Accokeek Foundation and some of the other park partners were doing innovative things and encouraged the NPS to take greater advantage of what its partners have to offer. She advocated a more dynamic exchange of ideas between the NPS and the Accokeek Foundation. Hayes conceded that she has at times been frustrated in her dealings with the NPS and would like to see improved communication, particularly with NACE and NCR.[112] She also observed that one of the challenges she has faced over the years in dealing with the NPS was the frequent turnover of personnel. This hampered effective communication. Each time there was a personnel change, she would have to explain the problem or situation over again. She used the example of a septic system at National Colonial Farm that needed repair.[113]

During his time as NACE superintendent, Alex Romero worked with the Foundation to try to identify funding to address the septic system problem, but he had to balance the park service's concerns and

---

[109] Smith interview; Romero interview.
[110] Miles interview; Hayes interview; Corkern interview; Busby interview.
[111] Corkern interview.
[112] Hayes interview.
[113] Ibid.

responsibility for upholding federally-mandated processes and protecting the archeological resources in the area. He understood the frustration that NPS partners sometimes felt. As a private partner, he explained, the Accokeek Foundation might not fully understand the NPS processes and the time that it takes to navigate those processes. Over time he was gratified to see communication between the two organizations improve. More generally, he recommended that the NPS make a greater effort to educate its partners about the various processes, such as NEPA. The ongoing problems with the septic system highlight the broader challenge the NPS faces in maintaining the infrastructure in the park.[114]

The history of Piscataway Park clearly demonstrates that the most successful partnerships are those that give all the partners and stakeholders a voice and seek success for everyone involved. The Moyaone Association's president, Ben Kirkup, described that association's relationship with the NPS as generally very positive and also emphasized the importance of maintaining good relations among all the various partners. "We all need to play," he explained, "and sometimes that works better than others." Indeed, Kirkup sought greater engagement between the residents and the NPS, as well as greater community involvement in, and support for, the park.[115]

Another challenge for the NPS in the future could be to find ways to expand its role in the interpretation of the various sites inside the park, broaden its interpretive framework, and improve the quality of interpretation. The success of the efforts by the NPS to preserve the landscape depends to a great extent on working with partners and communicating the significance of that landscape to visitors. There is still room for improvement in the way the NPS interprets the landscape's significance to the Piscataway people for park visitors.[116] Rather than focus on the theme of how people have influenced the land, Superintendent Smith suggested, the park could highlight the theme of how the land has influenced people. "There is a reason why people go to a place today," Smith explained, "people went there yesterday, and people went there a thousand years ago." Thus she suggested that the interpretation on the waysides that visitors should be location specific. "The reason we are here today is because we are preserving this," she explained. "You are not here all by yourself."[117] Echoing the sense of timelessness and the connection to place that the park provides, Karen Jensen Miles of the Alice Ferguson Foundation, whose family has a long history with the park and grew up there observed, "Thousands of years ago this

[114] Romero interview; Busby interview.
[115] Ben Kirkup, Interview by Janet McDonnell, July 14, 2017.
[116] Hayes, "Piscataway Park: A Landscape of the Potomac," *Living Landscape Observer*.
[117] Smith interview.

was a good place to live and it's still a good place to live."[118] Another thematic framework that will become increasingly important for the park in the future is sustainability. "We are more than National Colonial Farm interpretation," Lisa Hayes explained. She pointed out that Accokeek Foundation now has a "green history" initiative, to look at contemporary environmental issues through the lens of history.[119]

Piscataway Park is unique in a number of ways, adding to its value and significance. There is no direct precedent for what has been done at Piscataway Park. The park is unique in that it was created primarily to preserve a viewshed from private property across the river – the Mount Vernon estate. While it does not represent the first use of scenic easements, it was one of the first park units to use them so extensively. Indeed the park has served as a model in this regard, and those scenic easements will continue to play a critical role in the park's future.

In addition, Piscataway Park has come to demonstrate a value well beyond preserving a viewshed. Its role in preserving important natural and cultural resources has grown and become increasingly important. This includes its role in preserving the park's rich archeological resources and its preservation and interpretation of American Indian heritage. The history of Piscataway Park is complex, as are the relationships among the partners and stakeholders, particularly as these private organizations have developed their own plans for the limited development of park resources. Yet for all the complexities and challenges, the value of Piscataway Park to those who live there and to those who visit continues to resonate.

[118] Karen Jensen Miles interview.
[119] Hayes interview.

Appendix 1

TIMELINE

1916 National Park Service established

1922 Henry G. Ferguson and Alice L.L. Ferguson purchased Hard Bargain Farm

1935 Historic Sites Act of 1935

1950s

1952 Moyaone Association established

1955 Representative Frances Bolton purchased 485 acres across from Mount Vernon

1954 Alice Ferguson Foundation chartered

1957 Accokeek Foundation chartered with Representative Frances Bolton as president

1959 National Colonial Farm established

1960s

1960 Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission announces plans for sewage treatment plant

1961 President John F. Kennedy signs legislation authorizing Piscataway Park

1963 Department of the Interior and the Accokeek Foundation sign cooperative agreement

1963 Department of the Interior and Alice Ferguson Foundation sign cooperative agreement

1966 Accokeek Creek Site listed as a National Historic Landmark

1966 Historic Preservation Act

1966 P.L. 89-513 authorized funds for Piscataway Park

1967 Congress appropriated $1.5 million for the park

1968 Piscataway Park dedication ceremony

1970s

1974 President Gerald Ford signed legislation adding 625 acres to the park

1975 Marshall Hall added to park

1976 Marshall Hall listed on National Register of Historic Places

1979 Piscataway Park added to National Register of Historic Places

1979 Piscataway Chief Turkey Tayac interred in the park

1980s

1980 National Colonial Farm Development Concept Plan

1981 Marshall Hall fire

1983 Piscataway Park General Management Plan

1986 Maryland Department of Natural Resources agreement to operate Fort Washington Marina

1990s

1990 Potomac River Conference held at Mount Vernon

1990 Ecosystem farm opened

1992 Alice Ferguson Foundation cooperative agreement amended

1994 Expansion of park boundaries

2000s

2002 Accokeek Foundation renewed cooperative agreement

2006 Captain John Smith National Historic Trail established

2008 73 acres added to park

2010 Park celebrated completion of "Living Shoreline" project

2012 Maryland governor extended recognition to Piscataway Indians

2015 First superintendent appointed for Piscataway Park

2015 Alice Ferguson Foundation ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new Environmental Education Building

2016 NPS resumed operations and management of Fort Washington Marina

Appendix 2

KEY LEGISLATION

Public Law	87-362	October 4, 1961
Public Law	89-513	July 19, 1966
Public Law	92-533	October 23, 1972
Public Law	93-444	October 15, 1974
Public Law	95-625	November 10, 1978
Public Law	96-344	September 8, 1980
Public Law	103-350	October 6, 1994

Appendix 3

NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS – EAST SUPERINTENDENTS *

Grover Earl Steele, Supt.	5/24/1965 – 7/31/1970
Robert G. Stanton, Supt.	8/23/1970 – 8/22/1971
Abner M. Bradley, Supt.	8/27/1971 – 12/22/1973
Ira J. Hutchinson, Supt.	12/23/1973 – 4/09/1977
Terrie R. Savering, Acting Supt.	4/10/1977 – 8/15/1977
Dorothy T. Benton, Acting Supt.	8/16/1977 – 9/15/1977
Robert S. McDaniel, Acting Supt.	9/16/1977 – 10/15/1977
Burnice T. Kearney, Acting Supt.	10/16/1977 – 12/15/1977
Eugene Colbert, Supt.	2/12/1978 – 1/15/1979
Burnice T. Kearney, Acting Supt.	1/16/1979 – 6/9/1979
Burnice T. Kearney, Supt.	6/10/1979 – 11/4/1989
Terry R. Savering, Acting Supt.	11/5/1989 – 2/24/1989
Gentry Davis, Supt.	2/25/1990 – 1996
John Hale, Supt.	1997 – 2003
Gayle Hazelwood, Supt.	2003 – 2009
Alex Romero, Supt.	2009 – 2012
Gopaul Noojibail, Acting Supt.	2012 – 2013
Gopaul Noojibail, Supt.	2013 – 2016
Tara Morrison, Supt.	2016 –

SUPERINTENDENT PISCATAWAY PARK**

Christine Smith	7/2015 -2020
Michael Commisso, Acting Supt.	2020 -

*Includes Piscataway Park and Fort Washington during this time period.

**Also includes responsibility for Fort Washington Park, Oxon Cove Park, Fort Foote Park, and Harmony Hall.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Record Collections and Archives

Accokeek Foundation. Southern Maryland Studies Center College of Southern Maryland (CSM).
Holliday Wagner Papers. Moyaone Reserve, Maryland.
Library of Congress. Manuscript Division. David E. Finley Papers.
Mount Vernon Ladies' Association. Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon. MVLA Overview and Charles Cecil Wall Papers.
National Archives and Records Administration. College Park, MD. Record Group 79. Records of the National Park Service.
National Capital Parks – East
National Capital Region
National Park Service Denver Service Center Technical Information Center (TIC), (http://etic.nps.gov)
National Park Service. Harpers Ferry Center. NPS History Collection. Harpers Ferry, WV.
National Park Service Integrated Resource Management Applications (IRMA), (https://irma.nps.gov)
National Park Service Park History Program, Washington, DC

Books and Reports

Accokeek Foundation. *Study/Action Plan National Colonial Farm, Piscataway Park, Maryland*. National Park Service Contract, May 11, 1979.

Chambers, S. Allen, Jr. *National Landmarks, America's Treasures: The National Park Foundation's* National Park Service. *The National Parks: Shaping the System*. National Park Service, 2005.

Complete Guide to National Historic Landmarks. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. NY: National Park Foundation, 2000.

Congressional Record.

Ferguson, Alice L.L. *Adventures in Southern Maryland, 1922-1940.* 1941. Alice Ferguson Foundation, 3d printing, 2011.

Ferguson, Henry G. *Hard Bargain Adventures*. Alice Ferguson Foundation, 1966.

Foresta, Ronald A. *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*. Washington, DC: Resources for the Future, 1985.

Gardner, William M. *Archeological Survey of Piscataway Park, Maryland*, May 1, 1969.

Gonzalez, Patrick Jr., *Climate Change and Impacts for the National Parks of Washington, DC, USA*, March 23, 2013.

Hartzog, George B. Jr. *Battling for the National Parks*. Mt. Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell, 1988.

Hughes, Brady A. and Sarah S. Hughes. *Marshall Hall: A Historical Study of the Marshall Hall Sit*e. Hampton University and National Park Service, 1985.

Hunter, Wilbur Harvey. *Creating Piscataway Park: A History of Legislation*. Accokeek Foundation, 1979.

King, Julia H., Travis T. Hanson, Scott M. Strickland, "Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Piscataway Park," National Park Service (2020), in the collection at Piscataway Park and also National Capital Parks – East (NACE), Washington, DC.

Long, Susan. *Historic Structure Report Architectural Data Section for Marshall Hall Piscataway Park*. National Park Service, January 1983.

Mackintosh, Barry. *Interpretation in the National Park Service*. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1986.

Mackintosh, Barry and Janet A. McDonnell. *The National Parks: Shaping the System*. National Park Service, 2005.

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Prince George's County Planning Department, *Conserving Significant Cultural Landscapes: Protecting the Piscataway and Accokeek Historic Communities and the Mount Vernon Viewshed*, March 12, 2013.

McGarry, Thomas E. *Piscataway Archeological Survey – 1981, Piscataway Park*. National Park Service, Denver Service Center, December 1982.

McNett, Charles W. Jr., ed. "Archeological Survey of Piscataway Park," National Park Service, Denver Service Center, and The American University. 1987.

Mengak, Kathy. *Reshaping Our National Parks and Their Guardians: The Legacy of George B. Hartzog, Jr.* Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2012.

National Capital Parks - East, *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects at National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park) Environmental Assessment*, July 2009.

National Park Service. Denver Service Center. Environmental Assessment Piscataway Park Fort Washington Marina. December 1979.

National Park Service. *Land Use Survey of Piscataway Park.* 1963.

National Park Service. *Management Plan 2006*.

National Park Service. *National Park Service Annual Report to the Secretary of the Interior*.

National Park Service. National Capital Parks – East. *Resource Protection and Visitor Accommodation Projects National Capital Parks – East (Piscataway Park), Environmental Assessment.* July 2009.

Olson, Russ. *Administrative History: Organizational Structures of the National Park Service, 1917-1985*. National Park Service, 1985.

Potter, Stephen R. *A Review of the Archeological Resources in Piscataway Park, Maryland*. National Park Service, National Capital Region, July 1980.

Rice, James D., *Nature and History in the Potomac Country* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins) 2009.

Scott-Childress, Reynolds. *History of Marshall Hall Property*. University of Maryland and National Park Service, 2007.

Stephenson, Robert L. T*he Prehistoric People of Accokeek Creek*. With Stephen R. Potter "A New Look at the Accokeek Creek Complex." Alice Ferguson Foundation, 1984.

Straus, Robert Ware. *The Possible Dream: Saving George Washington's View*. Accokeek Foundation, 1988.

Toogood, Anna Coxe. *Piscataway Park: General Historic Background Study*. National Park Service, 1969.

Wirth, Conrad L. *Parks, Politics, and People*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980.

Articles

"Alice L.L. Ferguson." *Women of Achievement in Prince George's County History*. 51.

"Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail," *Wikipedia,* accessed November 29, 2016

"Cardin, Hoyer Announce Addition of 73 Acres to Piscataway National Park," April 28, 2008, https://www.cardin.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release, accessed May 13, 2016

Hayes, Dr. Lisa. "Piscataway Park: A Landscape of the Potomac," *Living Landscape Observer*, accessed May 13, 2016 http://livinglandscapeobserver.net/piscataway/

Lutz, Lara. "Piscataway Park's role evolved from saving a view to sharing a point of view," *Bay Journal*, December 1, 2008, www.bayjournal.com/article/piscataway_parks_role_evolved, accessed February 9, 2016.

Masur, Jenny. "Working with Traditionally Associated Groups: A Form of Civic Engagement," *George Wright Forum* 24, no. 3, 2009: 85-94.

McLaughlin, Nancy. "Conservation Easements – A Troubled Adolescence." *Journal of Land Resources and Environmental Literature* 26. no. 1, 2005: 47-56.

Meringolo, Denise D. "The Accokeek Foundation and Piscataway Park." *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 5, no. 1, winter 2008, www.nps.gov/history/crmjournal/winter2008/article3.html, accessed January 25, 2016.

Merrell, James H. Merrell, "Cultural Continuity among the Piscataway Indians of Colonial Maryland," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Oct. 1979), pp. 548-570.

Our History and Timeline – Accokeek Foundation, http://accokeekfoundation.org/our-history-timeline/, accessed February 6, 2017.

Sarvis, Will. "A Difficult Legacy: Creation of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways." *The Public Historian* 24, no. 1: 31-52.

Tayac, Gabrielle, "Keeping the Original Instructions," in Gerald McMaster and Clifford E. Trafzer, editors, *Native Universe - Voices of Indian America* (Washington, DC: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution) 2008.

"Udall Brothers." *Journal of Arizona History* 41. no. 4, winter 2000.

Dissertation

Tayac, Gabrielle Astra. "'To Speak with One Voice:' Supra-Tribal American Indian Collective Identity Incorporation among the Piscataway, 1500 – 1998." PhD diss., Harvard University, 1999.

Newspapers

The (Washington) Evening Star
Smoke Signals
The Washington Post

Oral Histories

Busby, Virginia. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. August 3, 2017.
Corkern, Dr. Wilton C. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. January 17, 2017.
Dunn, Megan. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. February 14, 2017.
Hayes, Dr. Lisa. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. February 17, 2017.
Kirkup, Ben. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. July 14, 2017.
Miles, Karen Jensen. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. March 23, 2017.
Newman, Rico. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. July 21, 2017.
Romero, Alexcy. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. July 19, 2017.
Rosenstock, James. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. March 2, 2017.
Smith, Christine. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. January 31, 2017.
Stanton, Robert. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. March 21, 2017.
Straus, Eric. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. October 21, 2016.
Syphax, Stephen. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. January 13, 2017.
Wagner, Holliday. Interview by Janet A. McDonnell. October 21, 2016.

Websites

www.nps.gov/pisc/pway.htm
www.moyaone.org
www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=27285
http://fergusonfoundation.org/newsletters