

CORSICA RIVER WATER TRAILS

Paddling Adventures along Historic Waterways Near Centreville, Maryland

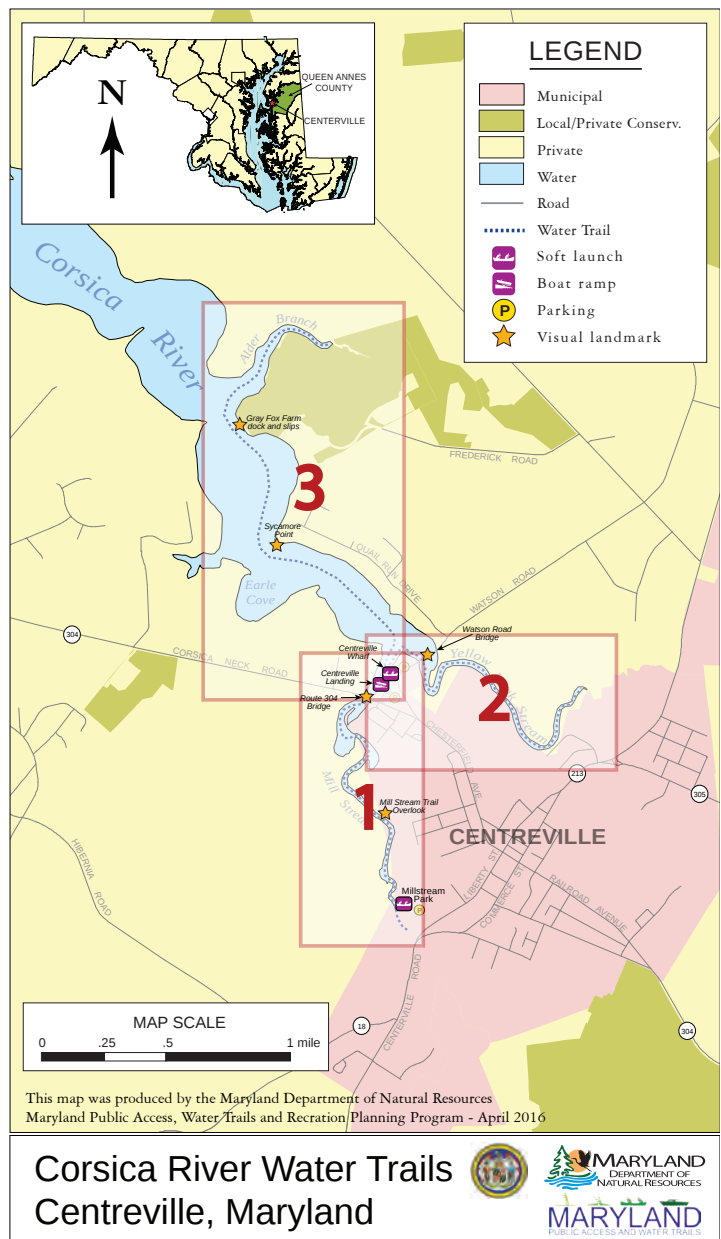
For over 200 years, the Town of Centreville, Maryland has served as the center of commerce and government for Queen Anne's County. Easy maritime access from the wharf, located at the headwaters of the Corsica River, influenced the founding of the town. Centreville was incorporated in 1794 and boasts Maryland's oldest continually occupied county courthouse. The busy wharf made the town a successful center for trade. During the 1700's shipments of tobacco were sent to merchants in Great Britain and during the Revolutionary War, critical supplies of wheat and cattle for the rebel American army came through the port. Over time, shipping increased and steamboats were transporting farm equipment, fertilizer, tourists, and even elephants for county circuses. In the late 1800's the wharf had many grain warehouses, shipping offices and hosted a floating theatre on a regular basis. Today, the wharf encompasses over two acres and features buildings that make it reminiscent of its original use.

Public water access is provided at two adjacent, but distinct sites. Centreville Wharf is located on Watson Road and is operated by the Town of Centreville. The wharf complex includes: a soft launch, for non-motorized vessels like kayaks and canoes, boat slips, fishing area, playground equipment, picnic tables and a parking lot for cars only.

Centreville Landing is located at 201 Front Street and is operated by the Queen Annes County Parks Department. The landing is open 24-hours and includes: a 26-foot wide boat ramp for motorized vessels, boat slips and a large paved lot for cars and trailers. Permanent restrooms are available from April through November. A current Queen Anne's County public landings permit must be displayed by every vehicle, with or without a trailer, for either the launching of a boat or for general parking in the landing lot. For information call 410-758-0835 or visit <http://www.qac.org/1009/Landings-and-Piers>.

All of the Corsica River water trails start from the soft launch at Centreville Wharf. These trails provide water recreation opportunities for paddlers of all abilities. Novice paddlers or those seeking a leisurely experience will enjoy exploring the Mill Stream and Yellow Bank Stream trails. These routes follow slowly meandering waterways which pass through low marshes and are sheltered from extreme winds and currents. More experienced paddlers can take on the challenge of open water and longer distance offered by the Corsica River and Alder Branch Trail.

The wharf and landing areas can get very busy during the boating season. Have all of your gear ready and be courteous to others as you prepare to launch. Changing winds, currents and tides can result in hazardous conditions for paddlers. Be sure to check conditions before you launch since these factors may impact the route and direction that you paddle. This guide is meant to be used as a reference for explored routes and areas of public access. It is strongly recommended that you consult a range of other detailed maps, charts and supplemental information geared to your specific needs when planning for, or undertaking, extended excursions beyond those designated in this publication.



1 MILL STREAM TRAIL

Distance: Approximately 1.25 miles one way or 2.5 miles round-trip

Difficulty: Novice — This trail follows a shallow, mostly sheltered and meandering waterway.

This trail enters Mill Stream directly from the wharf's soft launch and takes you to Millstream Park at the southern gateway to the Town of Centreville. Paddlers will enjoy scenic views as the stream winds through secluded wetlands fringed by tall beech and oak trees. From the soft launch, head south and pass under the Rt. 304 bridge. Continue southeast along the stream to Millstream Park.

Centreville Wharf was the site of an active shipping industry in the 19th century. Several of the structures from that period survive including the four identical captain's houses. Once the victorian residence of Capt. John Ozman and his former ship's store, they are now private residences. You can see the structures from the water in the vicinity of the Rt. 304 bridge. In addition to shipping activity, 'showboats' used to visit the landing to provide entertainment and the circus used the site to stage its parade up Chesterfield Avenue into town. Today, the Town is developing the wharf as an historic community focal point with a park, living shoreline and businesses like boat rentals and fishing supplies.

The water trail is paralleled by a land trail that runs through Millstream Park. Some birds that are commonly seen in this area, and throughout the Corsica watershed, include bald eagles, ospreys, great blue herons, kingfishers, geese and red shouldered hawks. Mammals such as deer, muskrats, beavers and river otters can occasionally be seen.

Millstream Park is open from dawn to dusk daily and is operated by the Town of Centreville. It was once the location of the Centreville spur of the Queen Anne's Railroad Company which transported goods and travelers between Denton and Queenstown. The park has picnic and restroom facilities, playground equipment and a basketball court. Small non-motorized boats can be launched or retrieved from the low shoreline area adjacent to the trail. For more information on the park visit www.townofcentreville.org/departments/parks-recreation.asp or call 410-758-1180.



2 YELLOW BANK STREAM TRAIL

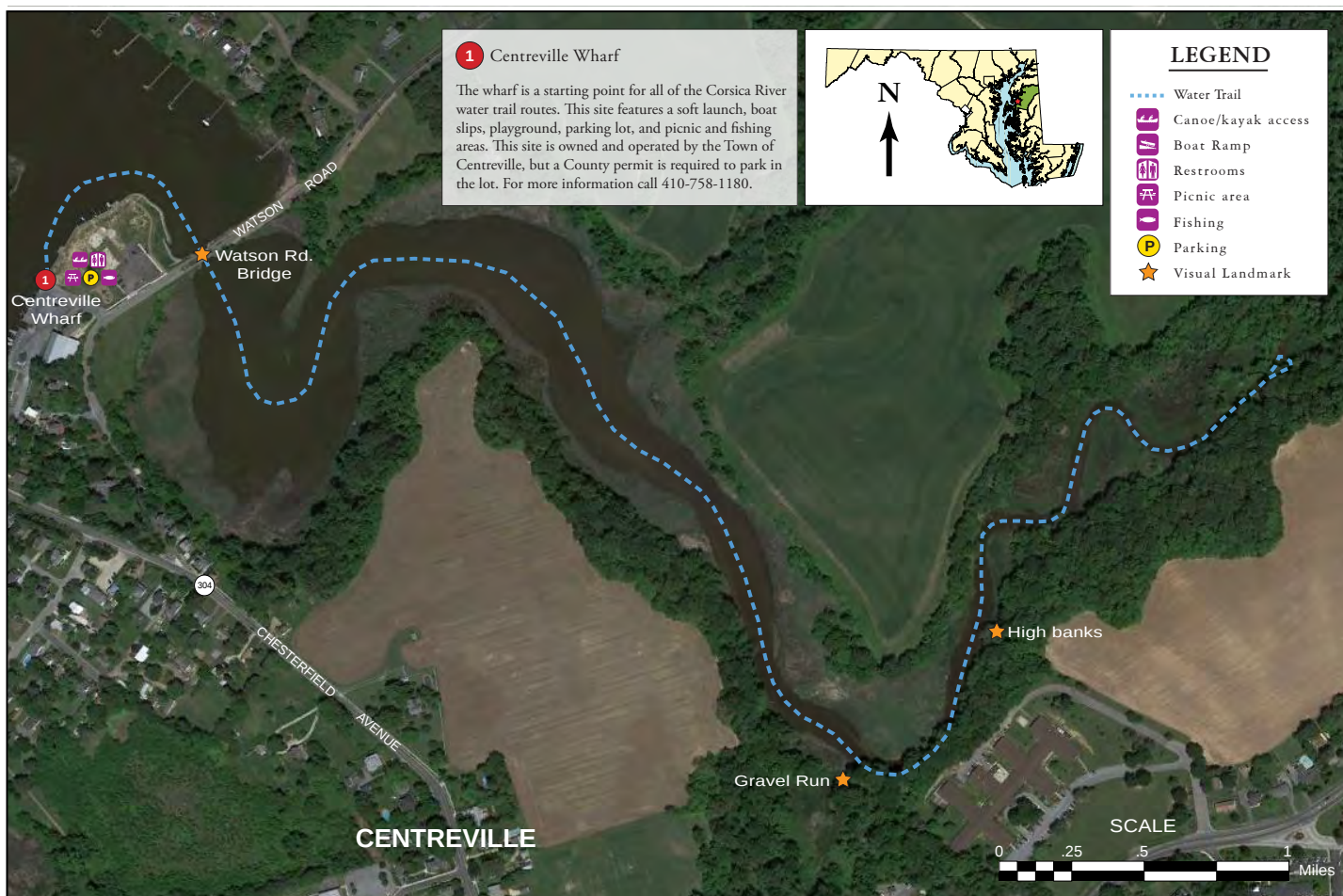
Distance: Approximately 3 miles round-trip

Difficulty: Novice — This trail follows a shallow, mostly sheltered and meandering waterway.

This trail starts at Centreville Wharf and follows Yellow Bank Stream to its navigable extent which is the northernmost headwaters of the Corsica River. Be sure to consult a tide chart before you attempt this route. During extreme high tides, it may not be possible to pass under the Watson Road bridge and during very low tides, the headwaters will be mud flats.

From the wharf, head north out of Mill Stream, past the bulkhead and boat slips, to the Corsica River. Turn right at the point and go under the Watson Road bridge. Once past the bridge you will be in Yellow Bank Stream. As you approach the Watson Road Bridge, a living shoreline project that was installed by the Town in 2012 is visible on the bank to your right. After this point, you enter an expansive wetland area. Follow the main channel around the big bend and you will be in a low marsh lined with phragmites on one side and mature trees on the other. You may see wood-duck boxes mounted on PVC pipes or posts throughout the marsh. Wood ducks prefer quiet inland fresh water with stable levels throughout the summer, but may tolerate slightly brackish water. These boxes are installed and maintained by Chesapeake Wildlife and Heritage Inc.

The second large bend in the stream marks the mouth of Gravel Run, which will be on your right. This is the third, and smallest, sub-watershed of the Corsica River. As you continue following the stream the shoreline to your right gradually rises to higher ground and a line of houses along Chesterfield Avenue may be visible. Among these houses is the original homestead of the 1670 Chesterfield land grant. The stream becomes narrower as you near the headwaters. Proceed as far as you are able then head back to the wharf.



Yellow Bank Stream Trail - Corsica River Water Trails Centreville, Maryland



This map was produced by the Maryland Public Access, Water Trails, and Recreation Planning Program - April 2016

3 ALDER BRANCH TRAIL

Distance: Approximately 2.5 miles round-trip

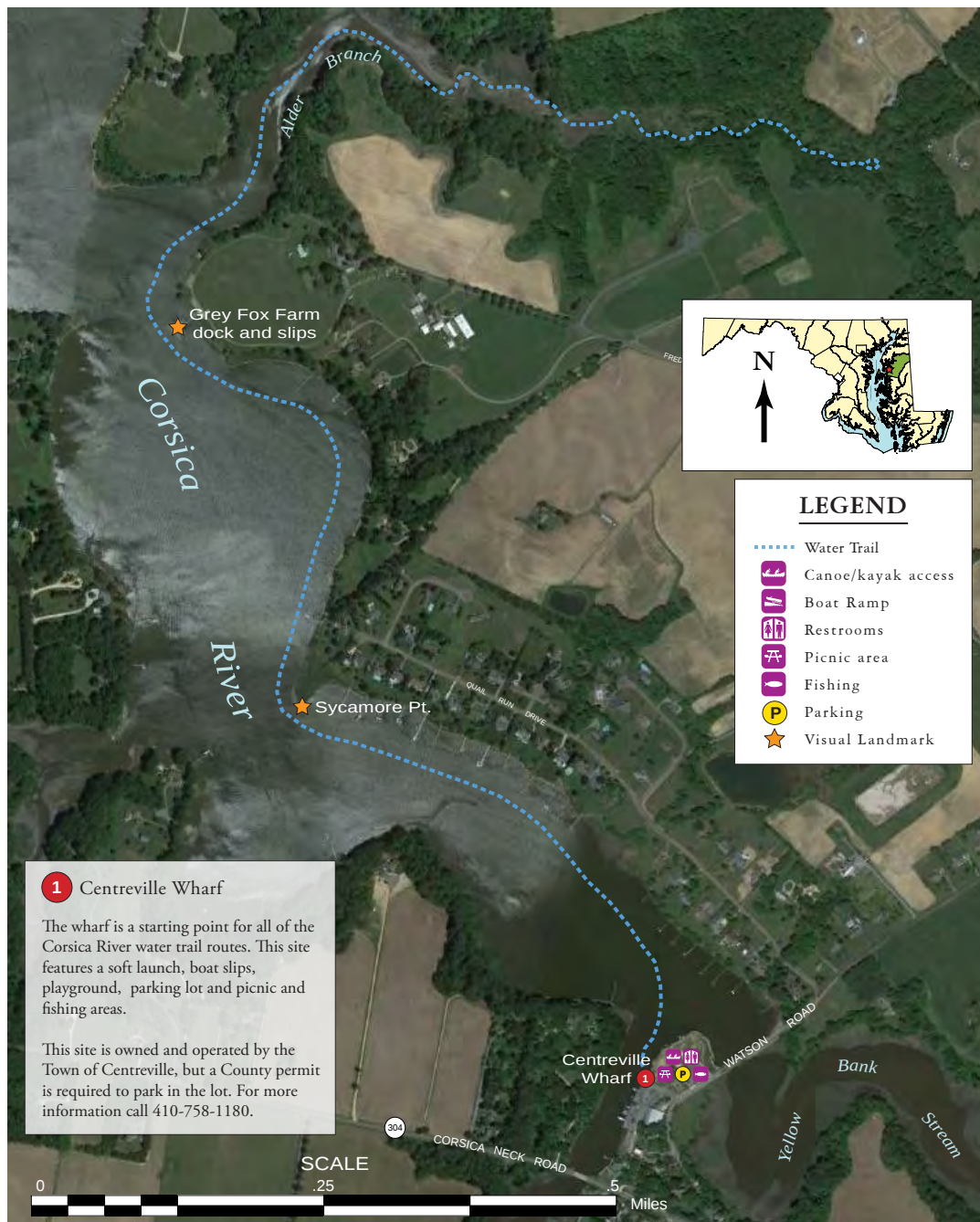
Difficulty: Intermediate to experienced — This trail follows a shallow, mostly sheltered and meandering waterway.

Start from the soft launch at the wharf and head north out of Mill Stream, past the bulkhead and boat slips, to the Corsica River. Turn left and continue along the mainstem of the Corsica River. As you proceed down river, on your right there is a small residential community which has restored native grasses along their shorelines and are growing oysters at their piers under the Maryland Grows Oysters (MGO) program. All of the Corsica is a state protected oyster sanctuary closed to harvesting.

The trail continues northeast along Alder Branch, a tributary creek, before returning to the wharf. Sycamore Point on the right marks the next section of this trail. From here set your course through open water towards the large pier and boathouse on the north shoreline straight ahead. That property is now called Grey Fox Farm but once had a wharf called “Spencer’s Landing” referred to on 19th century maps in Emory’s history of Queen Anne’s County. During the 1850’s, the Eastern Shore Steamboat Company fast steamer, the Champion ran twice a week between Baltimore’s Light Street Wharf and various points in the County, including Spencer’s Wharf.

From this point, turn right into Alder Branch. This location marks the down river boundary of the 400 acre grant made to William Hemsley in 1670 called “Chesterfield” upon which the Town of Centreville was established, later becoming the County seat. From here, enjoy a calm sheltered paddle up the increasingly shallow creek which finally dog legs to the right. A morning visit to this area should reveal turtles warming on logs and busy heron rookeries.

As you return from Alder Branch, the high point shoreline directly opposite the mouth of Alder Branch is Fort Point. This prominent site was the location of a fortification built during the War of 1812 in anticipation of a British naval attack on Centreville. The attack never took place. Continue back up river to the Wharf to complete this route.



Paddling and Boating Safety Tips

Although many creeks and coves depicted in this publication are suitable for beginners, there are extensive areas of open water that are subject to tidal influence, high winds and strong currents. Be prepared! Review these guidelines before getting on the water.

- ♦ Wear a properly-fitted, U.S. Coast Guard approved, lifejacket while on the water. (See *Maryland Boating Regulations* below)
- ♦ Boat with others and carry a spare paddle. Boating safety increases with numbers so boat with others. Leave a copy of your "float plan" with a land-based contact.
- ♦ Know your route and any potential hazards along it. Review maps, charts, tides, and weather conditions before launching. Be aware of obstacles such as fallen trees, debris, islands and rocks that you may encounter along the route.
- ♦ Dress appropriately for the weather, air and water temperatures and always wear protective footwear.
- ♦ Carry a supply of food and water adequate for the length of your trip. Stay hydrated and protected from the sun year-round to minimize the danger of dehydration and heat exhaustion.
- ♦ Never paddle farther from shore than you are prepared to swim and stay at least 100 yards away from all moving vessels, piers and other restricted areas.
- ♦ Keep your weight centered and as low as possible at all times, especially when entering and exiting a boat. If your boat flips over, remain calm. Hold on to your paddle and the boat if possible. Try to reach a calm, shallow spot or the shoreline, then empty the boat and re-enter.
- ♦ Be alert to weather changes. Thunderstorms can be common during the warm weather months and are usually accompanied by temperature drops, increased winds and dark clouds. Get off the water immediately if you see lightning. Check conditions before you go at www.weather.gov.

For more information on paddling and boating safety visit the sites below

<http://cgaux.org/boatinged/>
<http://dnr2.maryland.gov/Boating/Pages/safety.aspx>

Maryland Boating and Fishing Regulations

Personal Flotation Devices: Boats propelled by oars or paddles are required to carry one PFD of either Type I, II, III, or V for each person on board, regardless of length. All motorized craft 16-65 feet must carry a Type I, II, III, or V for each person on board, plus one extra Type IV. Anyone under the age of 13, in a boat less than 21 feet in length, while underway, must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket all times. (MD State Law).

Boat Registration: All boats, whether commercial or recreational, must be registered in Maryland if it is: equipped with any kind of primary or auxiliary mechanical propulsion; and used in Maryland most in a calendar year. U.S. Coast Guard documented vessels using Maryland waters are NOT exempt from the vessel excise tax. When used principally in Maryland, documented vessels must display a documented use decal. Visit <http://dnr2.maryland.gov/Boating/Pages/registration.aspx> for more information.

Fishing Licenses: Maryland's recreational fishing requirements and rules are divided into Tidal (Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries) and Non-Tidal. A Non-Tidal Fishing License is required for both resident and non-resident to fish in the Monocacy and its tributaries. Annual licenses require a fee for Maryland residents and non-residents, which allows fishing from January 1 through December 31. A 3-day or 5-day license can also be purchased for a reduced fee. For more information visit <http://dnr2.maryland.gov/fisheries/Pages/default.aspx>

Leave No Trace

Please practice the following stewardship principles of Leave No Trace:

1) Plan ahead and prepare.

- ◆ Know your route and the limitations of yourself and your group.
- ◆ Carry the proper equipment and clothing.
- ◆ Notify someone of the time you intend to return.

2) Stay in designated areas.

- ◆ Keep to designated trails and public areas.
- ◆ Keep groups small and avoid trampling plants.
- ◆ Protect wildlife and your food — store rations securely.
- ◆ Leave recreation areas and picnic sites cleaner than you found them.

3) Dispose of waste properly.

- ◆ Clean fish at designated areas.
- ◆ Pick up litter and dispose of waste in proper receptacles or take it with you.

4) Leave what you find and be considerate of other visitors.

- ◆ Respect natural and cultural heritage — leave all items as you found them.
- ◆ Keep noise to a minimum — enjoy the music of nature.
- ◆ Respect private property and the privacy of others.



For more information on Leave No Trace ethics visit www.lnt.org, call 1-800-332-4100, or contact your local resource managers for additional guidance.

Wildlife Viewing Ethics

1) Act responsibly.

Stay clear of nests, dens and rookeries. Do not touch or feed wild animals. Do not allow pets to interfere with wild animals.

2) Avoid getting too close.

View wild birds and other animals from an appropriate distance. If animals change their behavior, appear nervous, keep looking at you with head up and ears pointing toward you, or if an animal doesn't resume its normal activity, then you are too close.

3) Make your observation brief, then move on.

If you are looking at baby birds in a nest or fish in a pond, remember that they can't leave and that you are interrupting normal behavior.

4) Don't chase an animal.

Don't chase an animal while trying to get a better

glimpse or photo. Don't follow animals or behave in any way that might be seen as harassment. And don't allow your pets to do it either.

5) Move quietly and slowly.

At popular viewing sites, limit your movement and noise level so you do not distract the wildlife. Loud noises, sudden movements or an unannounced approach can startle and cause stress to animals.

6) Do not use calls or whistles, or try to rouse animals in any way.

This can interrupt breeding cycles, drive birds from their territories, or make animals "call shy" so they don't respond to the real thing.

7) Divide large groups of people into small groups.

Small groups of people are less disturbing, usually talk more quietly, and tend to act in a more responsible way than big groups do.

For More Information

The Corsica River Conservancy (CRC) is a group of local volunteers committed to restoring and preserving the Corsica River and its watershed. Members and volunteers work with stakeholders to improve water quality and habitat in order to remove the Corsica from the Environmental Protection Agency's Impaired Waters List. CRC's emphasis is hands-on, local monitoring, restoration and communication and it follows a cooperative approach among representatives of the Town of Centreville, Queen Anne's County and citizens of the watershed.

The Corsica River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (the Plan) is based upon a comprehensive and scientific assessment of the Corsica River Watershed and was completed in 2004. Sponsored by the Town of Centreville, the Plan was supported by stakeholder interests, and creates a blueprint for the sustainable environmental health of the Corsica River which has been designated as impaired under Maryland's Clean Water Action Plan since 1999, and given the highest priority for restoration. In 2012 a Six-Year Progress Report was put out by the **Corsica River Implementation Committee**, which evolved out of the Watershed Plan, and has been a strong force for conservation and restoration programs and projects throughout the watershed. Federal, state, and local governments, along with the CRC, are actively involved in promoting the benefits of the watershed and improving water quality.

Development of the Corsica River Water Trails was made possible through a technical assistance grant from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Public Access, Water Trails and Recreation Planning Program to the Town of Centreville, Maryland. These water trails are part of a statewide network of public water access sites and water trails that enhance water recreation for the general public.

Partnerships and Coordination

Project coordination, design and mapping for this publication were provided by the Maryland Public Access and Water Trails Program in partnership with the Town of Centreville, Queen Anne's County Parks Department, and the Corsica River Implementation Committee.

Town of Centreville

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www.townofcenterville.org/

Queen Anne's County Parks Department

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Centreville, MD 21617
phone: 410-758-0835
www.qac.org/229/Parks
www.qac.org/1009/Landings-and-Piers

Maryland Department of Natural Resources Public Access and Water Trails Program

580 Taylor Avenue, Suite E-2
Annapolis, MD 21401
DNR coordinates the creation of a statewide system of public water access sites and water trails and provides technical, planning and design assistance to local governments and other partners. For more information, visit <http://dnr2.maryland.gov/Boating/Pages/mdwatertrails.aspx>.

In Case of Emergency

In case of emergency, contact the Sheriff's Department Dispatch at (410) +911 and specify that you are in Queen Anne's County, Maryland or call the Maryland Natural Resource Police at 410-260-8888.



The facilities and services of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin or physical or mental disability.

*Project coordination, layout, design and maps by Lisa Gutierrez.
Text by Maryland DNR and the Corsica River Water Trails Committee*