



**First Landing State Park**  
2500 Shore Drive  
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

**First Landing State Park**  
**MASTER PLAN**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
2022 UPDATE

**Department of Conservation and Recreation**  
Division of Planning and Recreation Resources  
600 East Main Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219



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# First Landing State Park MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2022 UPDATE

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*Presented for review at a virtual public meeting on April 7, 2021, then recommended for adoption by the Board of Conservation and Recreation on May 12, 2022, and then reviewed for 30 days by the Virginia General Assembly.*

**Adopted:**



Matthew S. Wells, Director  
July 6, 2022



**FIRST LANDING STATE PARK  
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The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is the state's lead natural resource conservation agency. DCR protects what Virginians care about - natural habitat, parks, clean water, dams, open space and access to the outdoors.

**What We Do**

DCR enables and encourages people to enjoy and benefit from Virginia's natural and cultural resources

**What We Value**

DCR values diversity of nature, culture and communities to ensure a sustainable and equitable future for recreational access and a healthy environment for all Virginians to enjoy.

**How We Do It**

DCR accomplishes its mission through funding, expertise, education, acquisition and improved access.

**Park Purpose Statement**

*"The purpose of First Landing State Park is to preserve the unique natural environment of this historic site at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, while providing opportunities for low-impact outdoor recreation and strong programs of environmental education and historic presentation."*

**Introduction**

On April 26, 1607, over one hundred weary English settlers landed at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, erected a wooden cross, and named the area Cape Henry. This was the first landing of the settlers in the New World, before they sailed up the James River to settle permanently at Jamestown. Even before the Englishmen arrived, the Chesapeake Indians and their predecessors, the Algonquians, used the Cape Henry headlands for hunting and fishing grounds.

In 1933, the General Assembly authorized the acquisition of lands for a park at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. The park, originally named Seashore State Park, was opened in 1936 as one of six original parks in the Virginia State Parks System. Since 1991, estimated park attendance has exceeded 750,000 visitors per year. People come from all over the United States, as well as other countries, to explore the unique environments of the dunes, cypress swamps, and live oak stands. Visitors take part in the environmental education program, use the almost 20 miles of trails, picnic, boat, fish, camp near the Chesapeake Bay, sunbathe on the beautiful beach, and swim in waters of the Bay.

Officially renamed First Landing State Park on April 26, 1999, the park consists of some 2,888 acres of beaches, dunes, maritime forests, salt marshes, and fresh water wetlands located at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The park is in the Hampton Roads Planning District, Region 23; this area is home to more than 1.8 million people. Access to the park is provided off of U.S. Route 60 (Shore Drive) in Virginia Beach.

Since First Landing State Park first opened it has been recognized as a destination area, enticing visitors from throughout the Commonwealth to come and enjoy its unique resources. The park was developed as a cooperative effort between the National Park Service and the state. The initial design and most of the original construction projects were implemented by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) before World War II. After the war, the park was a popular place to go, and during the late 1940s and early 1950s, it was being "loved to death." The entire Virginia State Park System was closed from 1954 until 1961, and during those years, many of the natural resources that make up the park had a chance to recover from the overuse of earlier years. The park's natural significance became widely known, and about 1500 acres of the park's natural area were designated a National Natural Landmark in 1965 because of its unique and diverse habitats and the presence of some forty species of flora and fauna that are rare, threatened, or endangered.

Between the late 1960s and the early 1990s, some facilities were added and some use policies were altered, but basically, the park "stayed the course" established by the first master plan written over 60 years ago. The 1992 Virginia Park and Recreation Facilities Bond Act funds were used to upgrade facilities, including underground electric service, city sewer system connection, new water lines, a new restroom in the campground, a new maintenance facility, and a new residence. The Visitor Center was expanded, and the Chesapeake Bay Center, formerly known as "Big H," was created from existing buildings to provide additional administrative, concession, visitor information, and environmental education space. Most of the improvements were accomplished in existing developed areas, so there was actually no substantial expansion of the park's infrastructure.

### **Master Plan**

This 2022 First Landing State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is an update to the official unabridged master plan document adopted on September 27, 1999, by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director David G. Brickley. An updated master plan was approved on December 17, 2004, by DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon. The most recent update to the master plan was approved on June 16, 2010, by DCR Director David A. Johnson. This 2022 executive summary represents the most recent ten-year review described in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. This plan outlines the desired future condition of the park during a 30-year planning horizon. As required by the *Code of Virginia*, it must be revisited every ten years to ensure that the development objectives outlined in the plan continue to meet the recreational and conservation needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

While preparing the original 1998 First Landing State Park Master Plan, meetings were held with DCR staff and an advisory committee comprised of area citizens, local government officials, and representatives of interested organizations to assist with the development of the plan. The committee helped formulate a park purpose statement as well as park goals and objectives, which will guide future park operations and development. Public input was solicited at the beginning and at the end of the process to ensure that plan recommendations were understood and accepted by the community. After much discussion, there was general agreement that the unique natural, cultural, and historic significance of First Landing State Park should be protected and that additional development should be limited in scope. As a rule, only 10 to 15% of park acreage is earmarked for development. Following the development of the master plan, it was recommended for approval by the Board of Conservation and Recreation and then adopted by the DCR Director.

As a part of the 2022 master plan process, the original 1998 master plan, as well as the 2004 and 2010 park master plan updates, were reviewed. Planning staff met with park staff and conducted a site visit to the park to gather information for this plan update. A virtual public meeting was held on April 7, 2021 to share the draft plan and receive public input. Following the public meeting, the phased development plan and estimated costs were revised, as were the staffing and operational costs for the park for each phase of development. The final draft of the executive summary and map were developed.

The draft 2022 executive summary and map were presented to the Board of Conservation and Recreation at their May 12, 2022 meeting and were recommended for adoption. The documents were then placed on the DCR website for a 30-day review by the Virginia General Assembly. Following that review, the updated plan was presented to the DCR Director Matthew S. Wells for adoption. Following adoption, the updated executive summary and map were placed online <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/masterplans> for the public to access.

### **Park Resource Management Plan**

The Resource Management Plan consolidates all known resource information for a park and provides management direction for maintaining and enhancing those resources. The plan identifies the physical, abiotic, biotic, historic and archaeological characteristics of the park, as well as a description of the legal constraints and limitations of the property. The park is then delineated into the following areas:

- Undeveloped areas, based upon ecosystem types;
- Unique management areas, which are undeveloped areas with a specific purpose or function such as a historic battlefield or open field;
- Developed areas where park facilities are located yet have natural and cultural resources requiring specific management.

Following delineation of the Park, the Resource Management Plan then prescribes defined management objectives and recommended actions for each area in order to steward resources through the coming decade. However, it should be noted that due to the significance of multiple rare ecosystems throughout First Landing State Park, additional

inventories to clearly delineate sensitive community types will be required prior to implementation of proposed development.

## Natural Resources

First Landing State Park is a National Natural Landmark, as designated in 1965 by the National Park Service. Located within the larger Coastal Plain Physiographic Province, the park is 2,888 acres and comprised of seven distinct maritime ecosystem types as described below from largest to smallest:

1. **Maritime Upland Forest:** Of the seven ecosystems at First Landing State Park, the Maritime Upland Forest is the most abundant with approximately 1,384 acres. Within this ecosystem are several state significant species and natural communities including the following:
  - Spanish moss;
  - Wild olive (G5/S1);
  - Darlington oak;
  - Maritime Live Oak Forest (G2/S1);
  - Maritime Mixed Deciduous Forest (G1/S1).
2. **Non-Riverine Flatwood /Swamp:** One of the largest ecosystems at First Landing, this Swamp-type system covers approximately 1,066 acres and occurs in peat-filled swales between stabilized dunes that are part of an extensive ancient dune-and-swale landscape at First Landing. The current condition of the ecosystem in the park is excellent and since high quality examples of this ecosystem are uncommon throughout its range, it is ranked as globally uncommon to rare (G2G3/S1S2).
3. **Tidal Mesohaline and Polyhaline Marsh:** This ecosystem is almost 180 acres and runs along the entire southern boundary of the park where it borders Long Creek, Broad Bay and Linkhorn Bay. This ecosystem is threatened by the invasive non-native plant species, the common reed (*Phragmites australis*), which is spreading along the edges of the marshes and the upper reaches of the inlets.
4. **Maritime Dune Woodland:** Approximately 42 acres in size, this ecosystem occurs in a zone lying approximately 100 to 200 meters inland from the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean and is dominated by bluejack and live oak. This ecosystem type is not only one of the rarest natural communities in Virginia, it is also the only known example of this type globally and as such is listed as globally and state significant (G1/S1).
5. **Maritime Swamp:** At approximately 41 acres, this ecosystem occupies elongate, peat-filled swales in between forested dune ridges, and is dominated by bald cypress trees. This ecosystem type is extremely rare, known only from two sites globally, one in North Carolina and one at First Landing State Park. The example at First Landing is considered the best known occurrence of this very rare community type on the planet and, as such, this ecosystem is listed as globally and state significant (G1/S1).

6. **Maritime Dune Grassland:** Covering approximately 36 acres of First Landing, this ecosystem occupies the frontal and secondary dunes within 50-150 meters of the bay/ocean. There are state significant species found in this ecosystem type.
7. **Interdune Swale/Pond:** The smallest ecosystem at First Landing, covering only 12 acres at the park, the Interdune Swale/Pond occurs as a cluster of nine seasonally flooded basin wetlands within the Maritime Upland Forest in the northwestern part of the park. Within this ecosystem are several state significant species including the chicken turtle, purple bladderwort and long-beaked beaksedge. This ecosystem is globally and state significant (G2/S2).

Each of the ecosystem types described herein are subject to various management concerns and threats, possibly the greatest being recurrent flooding, and the importance of protection and management in this Park cannot be overstated.

Considered as a whole, First Landing State Park and its seven ecosystems fall within the First Landing-Fort Story Conservation site, a landscape that supports key habitats and natural heritage resources. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being most significant, the First Landing-Fort Story Conservation Site has been given a biodiversity ranking of B1, thus representing a site of outstanding biodiversity. Some of the natural heritage resources associated with this conservation site include rare plants and animals such as the following:

- Pineland tick-trefoil (G4/S2);
- Coastal water-pennywort (G5/S2);
- Wild olive (G5/S1);
- Sand laurel oak (G5/S1);
- Bluejack oak (G5/S2);
- Eastern big-eared bat (G3G4/S2);
- Chicken turtle (G5/S1);
- Barking tree frog (G5/S2).

Finally, it should be noted that First Landing State Park includes two Ecological Cores (C2 and C5) as identified in the Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment, one of a suite of tools in Virginia ConservationVision that identify and prioritize lands for conservation and protection. Mapped cores in the project area can be viewed via the Virginia Natural Heritage Data Explorer, available here: <http://vanhde.org/content/map>. Ecological Cores are areas of unfragmented natural cover with at least 100 acres of interior that provide habitat for a wide range of species, from interior-dependent forest species to habitat generalists, as well as species that utilize marsh, dune, and beach habitats. Cores also provide benefits in terms of open space, recreation, water quality (including drinking water protection and erosion prevention), and air quality (including carbon sequestration and oxygen production), along with the many associated economic benefits of these functions. The cores are ranked from C1 to C5 (C5 being the least ecologically relevant) using many prioritization criteria, such as the proportions of sensitive habitats of natural heritage resources they contain.

## **Cultural and Historic Resources**

Originally named Seashore State Park, the park was established in 1936 as one of six original parks in the Virginia State Park System. Built in part by an African-American Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) team from 1933-1940, the original park featured six original cabins, the Big H complex, picnic shelters, staff and maintenance facilities, tent and trailer campgrounds, and a circulation system of trails and roads.

The cultural history and resources of First Landing State Park can be traced back much further, though, to the Chesapeake Indians which used the location as a hunting camp. In fact, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has documented several archaeological sites in the park along Broad Bay and Linkhorn Bay. The sites are described as shell middens with associated sherds that include both fabric-impressed surface treatments and various tempers (shell and sand); lithic materials have also been noted. The approximate date of these sites was determined to be the Late Woodland period.

An additional site of Native American cultural significance was created in the park on April 26, 1997 when the remains of sixty-four Chesapeake Indians were re-interred into a sacred burial site at the park.

The Park was renamed First Landing State Park in 1999 to reflect the history of the 1607 landing of English settlers at Cape Henry; due to its rich natural and cultural resources, the Park is now listed as both a National Natural Landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places.

## **Visitor Experience Plan**

The park visitor experience management plan (VEP) is a companion document to the park resource management plan. Together they describe how the Division of State Parks will achieve its dual mission: “To conserve the natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources of the Commonwealth (resource management plan) and provide recreational and educational opportunities (visitor experience management plan) consistent with the good stewardship of these lands, waters, and facilities that leaves them unimpaired for future generations”.

The visitor experience management plan provides a park-wide vision for the future of interpretation, education, recreation and other visitor experience opportunities. The plan addresses all elements of a park that affect visitor experiences, including personal services, media, facilities, and landscapes. It is a conceptual document that lays a foundation for subsequent phases of comprehensive interpretive planning: facility and media planning, design and production; organization of staff and activities into annual visitor experience implementation plans.

The plan consists of three parts; the foundation, the experience areas, and the desired future. The foundation presents information needed to make decisions concerning how visitor experience opportunities will be planned, developed and managed. Each element of this foundation describes an essential criteria that must be considered to



create appropriate actions for inclusion in the desired future section of the plan. It identifies essential stories and experiences of the site, specific audience types and their wants, needs, and expectations, interpretive themes (essential messages), issues and influences, goals and objectives as well as park purpose and mission of the agency. Experience areas are drafted as part of the foundation workshop as well. This component of the plan will delineate, map and name geographic visitor experience areas based on distinct resource character and interpretive opportunities. Experience areas may be categorized by resource type or condition, social environment, type and extent of park development, level of management, or kind and density of visitor use. The desired future section of the visitor experience management plan describes the mix of personal service, media, facility, and landscape conditions that can effectively communicate park significance to guests and facilitate established visitor experience objectives. All desired future proposals will be tested against criteria presented in the Foundation section of the visitor experience management plan; appropriate proposals for inclusion in the plan as desired future recommendations should support most (preferably all) of the foundation criteria.

Planning sessions for First Landing State Park were initially held in order to create an exhibit concept plan, which was used to guide interpretive exhibits at the Trail Center. In 2017 planning workshops were held, and a draft Visitor Experience Management Plan has been submitted to park visitor experience staff to complete. Site stories that will drive programming, landscapes, and conservation include plant and animal life and ecosystems, history and cultural interactions, and recreation and conservation.

### **Attendance, Economic Impact and Park Revenues**

In 2020 First Landing State Park had 862,649 visitors, 150,245 were overnight guests, while 712,404 were day use visitors. With this level of visitation, it is estimated that the park had an economic impact on the local economy of approximately \$32.2M<sup>1</sup>.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Overnight</b>	130,512	142,310	131,841	132,383	140,606	133,704	146,278	142,996	162,080	150,245
<b>Day-Use</b>	1,386,218	1,432,445	1,448,745	1,332,588	922,753	927,133	1,114,313	768,850	589,927	712,404
<b>Total</b>	1,516,730	1,574,755	1,580,586	1,464,971	1,063,359	1,060,837	1,257,309	911,846	752,007	862,649
<b>Economic Impact<sup>2</sup></b>	-	-	-	-	\$16.2M	\$21.1M	\$23.5M	\$21.7M	\$33.5M	\$32.2M

<sup>1</sup> Virginia State Parks Economic Impact Report 2020, by Vincent P. Magnini, Ph. D

<sup>2</sup> Virginia State Parks Economic Impact Reports 2015-2020, by Vincent P. Magnini, Ph. D.

It is germane to note that economic impact modeling is not solely driven by total park attendance counts. A number of other inputs are also included in the modeling. Such inputs include, for example: park capital improvement expenditures, park operational expenditures not covered by visitor revenues, the ratio of in-state versus out-of-state visitors, the ratio of overnight versus day visitors, and the most recent IMPLAN economic multipliers. These modeling inputs account for the year-to-year fluctuations in the economic impact figures reported in the above Table with two exceptions:

- o In 2015, custom visitor spending profiles had not yet been constructed in Virginia; therefore, the research team used recent spending profiles from West Virginia State Parks as a modeling proxy. The use of this proxy is explained on page 5 of the 2015 economic impact report.
- o In 2017, an additional “average” column was added to the annual economic impact report. The “average” column presents the mean between “adjusted” and “unadjusted” outputs. This column was added in an attempt to gain additional consistency among media outlets reporting the annual

## **Demographics**

Virginia Beach, where First Landing State Park is located, is the most populated city in Virginia and borders Norfolk, and Chesapeake in Virginia, and Currituck County in North Carolina. According to the 2020 population estimates for Virginia Beach, the break down by race is as follows: Caucasian/White 66.3%, African-American/Black 19.0%, Hispanic 8.2%, Asian 6.7% and American Indian 0.3%. Of the Virginia Beach population, 89.6% are citizens of the United States. In 2020, there were 56,598 veterans living in Virginia Beach, which is 30% of Virginia's veteran population, and is the highest percentage in Virginia which averages eleven percent.

According to the VDOT 2020 Traffic Data Profile, 9,400 vehicles travel US Route 60 at the entrance to First Landing State Park daily. It should be noted that US Route 13 sees approximately 26,000 vehicles traveling past the Shore Drive exit each day, which is only a little over four miles from the park. According to the Virginia Tourism Coastal Virginia Region Travel Profile<sup>3</sup>, of 893 visitors surveyed, 12% rural sightseeing and 10% for urban sightseeing. The top ten states that visitors come from are Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, South Carolina, West Virginia, Florida and California.

## **Business Plan**

The purpose of the business plan is to develop realistic expectations for enterprise operations and service development at the State Park. This includes facilities, revenues, and expenditures associated with the park's operations. Business plans assist park management and staff at the State Park in the decision-making processes regarding the management, operation, and development of park business operations. The plan focuses on the financial impacts of management decisions as well as future expectations of new facilities. Information in this business plan can be used to inform DCR management and State legislators of financial and economic impacts at the State Park.

The business plan includes the park's mission, vision and objectives and is meant to serve as a look back at the park revenues and expenditures to determine trends and to predict the future earning potential of the park. It is also a roadmap to find new revenue producing opportunities that include both minimal expenses that can be budgeted for and more involved capital improvements.

At First Landing the staff has identified several new revenue producing opportunities. In 2019, the park was able to take over the camp store from the private concessionaire and has redesigned the store to include a small snack bar and retail space. Four yurts have been added to the campground expanding camping opportunities for visitors.

The staff would like to offer canoe/kayak tours of the Chesapeake and Broad Bays. Currently canoe and kayak tours and rentals are offered by local outfitters who receive

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results. Prior, some outlets were reporting adjusted outputs and others were reporting unadjusted outputs.

<sup>3</sup> The Virginia Department of Tourism Hampton Roads Region profile covers six counties and nine cities, from Charles City County to Virginia Beach.

the revenue and pay only the park entrance fee. The park staff has also identified the need to replace the current amphitheater with a more open shelter facility that will offer weddings and other such events with the opportunity to have views of the Bay as their back drop. The new shelter would be similar to the one at Chippokes State Park with kitchen space for caterers to use, seating inside the shelter and outside.

Based on historic data and current trends, the five-year estimates for revenues and expenditures are presented in the following table. The anticipated revenues do not include any new business opportunities as they were unfunded at the time the business plan was written.

**Five year financial estimates for the business plan<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>FY2021</b>	<b>FY2022</b>	<b>FY2023</b>	<b>FY2024</b>	<b>FY2025</b>
Anticipated Rev	\$2,763,779	\$2,838,156	\$2,976,495	\$3,122,291	\$3,275,971
Anticipated Exp	\$1,964,493	\$1,961,718	\$1,975,013	\$1,988,442	\$2,002,004
<b>TOTAL NET</b>	<b>\$799,286</b>	<b>\$876,438</b>	<b>\$1,001,482</b>	<b>\$1,133,849</b>	<b>\$1,273,967</b>

NOTE: Amounts in expenditure do not include capital or maintenance projects, which are budgeted separately.

Actuals for FY20

Actual Revenues FY20	\$3,753,426
Actual Expenditures FY20	\$1,818,865
Total Net FY20	\$1,934,561

**Current Facilities at First Landing State Park**

- Main contact station
- Trail Center contact station
- 64<sup>th</sup> Street contact station
- Trail Center/ park offices
- Chesapeake Bay Center/ park offices
- Cabin area with 20 cabins
- Campgrounds with 205 sites and 7 bathhouses
- 4 Yurts
- 19 miles of trails
- 1.5 miles of beach
- Boat launch with comfort station
- Picnic area and 1 shelter
- Playgrounds (2)

<sup>4</sup> Estimates were made when the business plan was written on 2019. Events of the summer of 2020 deterred visitation to the park for some time, thereby reducing actual results

Maintenance area  
Staff residences (5)  
Chesapeake Indian re-interment site  
Picnic shelter (in campground)  
Camp store

### **Environmental Design Guidance**

This 2022 master plan update describes both proposed facilities and improvements to existing facilities. New facilities are sited to minimize impact to the park, and in keeping with the prescriptive management areas as defined by the Park Resource Management Plan and the guidelines of the Park Visitor Experience Plan, when available. New facilities at this park should be designed and built with consideration to the original Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) design and layout of facilities. These facilities will be carefully sited to minimize impacts to the views in the park and of the park from adjacent lands and water bodies. Consideration will be given to eliminate excessive, misdirected or obtrusive artificial light in the park in order to maximize the dark sky effect and encourage astronomy and night-sky viewing.

Building and site design will implement green energy standards using energy-efficient and sustainable materials and procedures to the greatest extent possible. Green design initiatives will be considered during the design process for park renovations and new construction. Development activities will comply with requirements set forth by the Department of Environmental Quality's best management practices for erosion, sediment control and stormwater management in order to protect water quality. A setback guideline of 100 feet from the shoreline has been established by DCR, and trails and water-dependent facilities such as fishing stations, piers and other water access facilities will be the only developments permitted within the 100-foot setback.

There are potential challenges of overuse and crowded conditions, which may require management actions to protect the resources and the quality of the park experience. Issues related to resource carrying capacity and social carrying capacity should be evaluated prior to developing new facilities.

DCR strives to meet environmental challenges by providing facilities and programs that help reduce the waste stream and reduce each park's impact on the environment. Making recycling easier for visitors is a goal, as is taking advantage of developing technologies such as electric car charging stations and solar panels on park structures.

### **Connectivity**

This 2022 update places value on connecting First Landing to other resources in the community. From the park, people enjoy biking to the Virginia Beach Boardwalk and oceanfront following the Cape Henry Trail or along the bike lanes on Shore Drive. Other popular local trails include the Elizabeth River Trail, the Suffolk-Seaboard Coastline Trail, and the Dismal Swamp Canal Trail. Conservation areas with hiking trails nearby include Pleasure House Point Natural Area, Lake Smith Natural Area, Stumpy Lake Natural Area, and North Landing River State Natural Area. Federal points of interest

include the Dismal Swamp and Back Bay national wildlife refuges and Fort Monroe National Monument. A short drive leads to the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, the Association for Research and Enlightenment, Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art and the Virginia Beach Surf and Rescue Museum. The City of Virginia Beach has an outstanding park system, including world-renowned Mount Trashmore Park.

Water resources are abundant: in addition to the Chesapeake Bay, Broad Bay and Long and Wolfsnare creeks which serve as park boundaries, there are many smaller tributaries in close proximity to the park, along with the Atlantic Ocean. Water trails have been mapped on many river tributaries, including the Broad Bay Water Trail and the Southeast Coast Saltwater Paddling Trail. First Landing State Park is listed as a site on the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Birding and Wildlife Trail and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The 23-mile Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel is the gateway to the Eastern Shore. The North Landing River and sections of Pocatoy River, Blackwater Creek, and West Neck Creek are designated scenic rivers, and many of the roads near Back Bay are designated Scenic Byways. The First Landing State Park Regional Connectivity Map is an attachment to the full Master Plan document. Land and Water Conservation Fund

First Landing State Park received Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) in 1966 for boating and fishing facilities, and then again in 2004 for bathhouses. In compliance with the LWCF Act of 1965 and amendments thereto, the Commonwealth of Virginia is required to maintain the park for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

Virginia State Parks strive to be accessible to all Virginians and our guests. State parks are continually upgrading facilities to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and working to ensure our programs, services and activities are accessible to people with disabilities.

The following facilities are accessible at First Landing State Park: Campground Bathhouses Read, Collier, Gosnold, Archer and Kendall; Amphitheater; Gazebo; Playgrounds; Boat Ramp; Cape Henry Trail (Mix hard and dirt surface); Virginia Company Boardwalk; 64<sup>th</sup> Street Restroom; Camp Store; Chesapeake Bay Center Restrooms; Trail Center with interpretive displays; Visitor Center with interpretive displays; Residences #5 and #2; Shop Complex; Picnic Area Restroom and Picnic Shelter.

### **Land Acquisition/Viewshed Protection**

Recognizing that additional land acquisition is limited at First Landing State Park, it is important to take advantage of any opportunities that would enhance the park and the surrounding area. Land acquisition is recommended to enhance park offerings, establish connective trail easements/corridors, buffer the park from inappropriate development and/or protect valued viewsheds. Future land acquisitions will only be negotiated with willing property owners. The placement of conservation easements on adjacent property

to preserve the natural resources, cultural landscapes, and scenic resources in close proximity to the park will be encouraged. In working cooperatively with neighboring landowners, the park will be enhanced and protected over time.

### **Special Issue: Sea Level Rise/Storm Surge**

DCR must keep a close watch on changing projections for both sea level rise and storm surge impacts on First Landing State Park. There are challenges at this park involving storm surge and sea level rise which will require management actions to protect the resources and the quality of the park experience. These issues and impacts will require hard decisions and long term planning prior to developing new facilities or making the choice of maintaining or abandoning existing facilities.

The current master plan map shows a conservative 1.5 foot level of sea level rise (pink) and a 4.5 foot storm surge (orange). The science team at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) suggested for planning purposes the anticipation of a 1.5-foot rise in sea level within the next 30 to 50 years. These levels reflect a huge impact on the park and lands available for development at First Landing. In the Chesapeake Bay Region, the projected relative sea level rise is 2.3 to 5.2 feet by 2100, according to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee. Sea level rise will have many impacts on First Landing State Park and the surrounding Hampton Roads area. These include increased vulnerability to storm flooding and storm surge, permanent inundation of some areas, loss of wetlands and other ecologically important areas, and loss of infrastructure and facilities. Routes to and from First Landing may experience closure due to excessive flooding, which may severely limit access to the Park.

The City of Virginia Beach is developing plans to address both repetitive flooding and projected increases in flooding caused by sea level rise through the City's Comprehensive Sea Level Rise and Recurrent Flooding Response Plan. The plan is an effort between local government and various stakeholders (corporate and individual) to collect, sort, interpret, and understand the data behind how sea level rise is affecting the City and how to best respond.

Recurrent flooding is a threat to parks in low lying coastal areas including the Chesapeake Bay, Albemarle-Pamlico Sound and their tidal tributaries. Some low-lying areas will have more frequent flooding, and very low-lying land could be submerged completely. Recurrent flooding can also harm important coastal ecosystems and cause additional shoreline erosion. Sea level rise and storm surge are important factors to consider when designing, locating and constructing new facilities, and in the decision to renovate existing facilities.

## **Phased Development Plan**

The proposed developments for First Landing State Park are presented in priority order. Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan) and covers a 30-year timeframe. The phasing costs are based on 2021 cost estimates.

### **Phase I**

Renovate 20 cabin interiors and exteriors (*in progress April 2022*)

Replace Archer, Kendall, Wingfield and Percy Campground Bathhouses

Construct 1-six bedroom lodge and 4-three bedroom cabins

Construct pole shed in maintenance area for resource management storage

Replace staff residence at 2565 Sheltered Woods Lane

Enlarge and renovate staff residence at 2527 Sheltered Woods Lane

Replace culvert with bridge on Cape Henry Extension Trail

Upgrade campground roads (3 miles), including two lane traffic at contact station/entrance

Replace Susan Constant, Godspeed, & Discovery dune crossovers in campgrounds

Demolish amphitheater, and add a large screened shelter (capacity 120) with a fireplace

*The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$17,101,944*

### **Phase II**

Upgrade 64<sup>th</sup> Street Boat Ramp including road, parking, dock, ramp, and site drainage

Replace comfort station in picnic area.

Upgrade campgrounds with sewer and campsite improvements. (205 sites)

Reconfigure the existing parking at the Chesapeake Bay Center to increase capacity

Upgrade parking lot near the Narrows

Reconfigure 64<sup>th</sup> Street entrance with signage, new gate, fence removal and road widening

Construct parking (40 spaces) at Trail Center

*The total estimated cost for Phase II development is \$5,647,795*

### **Phase III**

Replace the 64<sup>th</sup> street contact station, include a rest room (*In progress April 2022*)

Upgrade Cape Henry Trail from Kendall St. to the Trail Center (2 miles)

Expand playground in picnic area

Construct small picnic shelter at Trail Center

Add bike/pedestrian path along 64<sup>th</sup> Street (3 miles)

*The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$2,222,251*

**The total estimated cost to bring First Landing State Park to its desired future condition is \$24,971,990**

## **Staffing and Operations**

Staffing and operational costs for First Landing State Park are based on fiscal year 2022 budget projections. Each development phase has specific staffing needs and operational costs. In addition, each phase will have one-time expenses for vehicles and other equipment associated with new staff and facility operations. Staffing and operational costs at First Landing State Park are presently budgeted at \$2,322,258 annually, including salaries for 10 staff positions. With the current facilities and operational requirements, the state parks matrix has an identified need of 10 additional positions and \$868,141 in funding for these positions. At complete build out of the proposed 3 phases of development, 1 additional position and \$244,453 in operating funds will be needed. In order for the park to operate effectively and efficiently at full build out, the park requires the existing staffing and operating costs and the projected costs for the 3 development phases. The total budget for First Landing at full build out is projected to be \$3,434,852 with 22 staff positions.



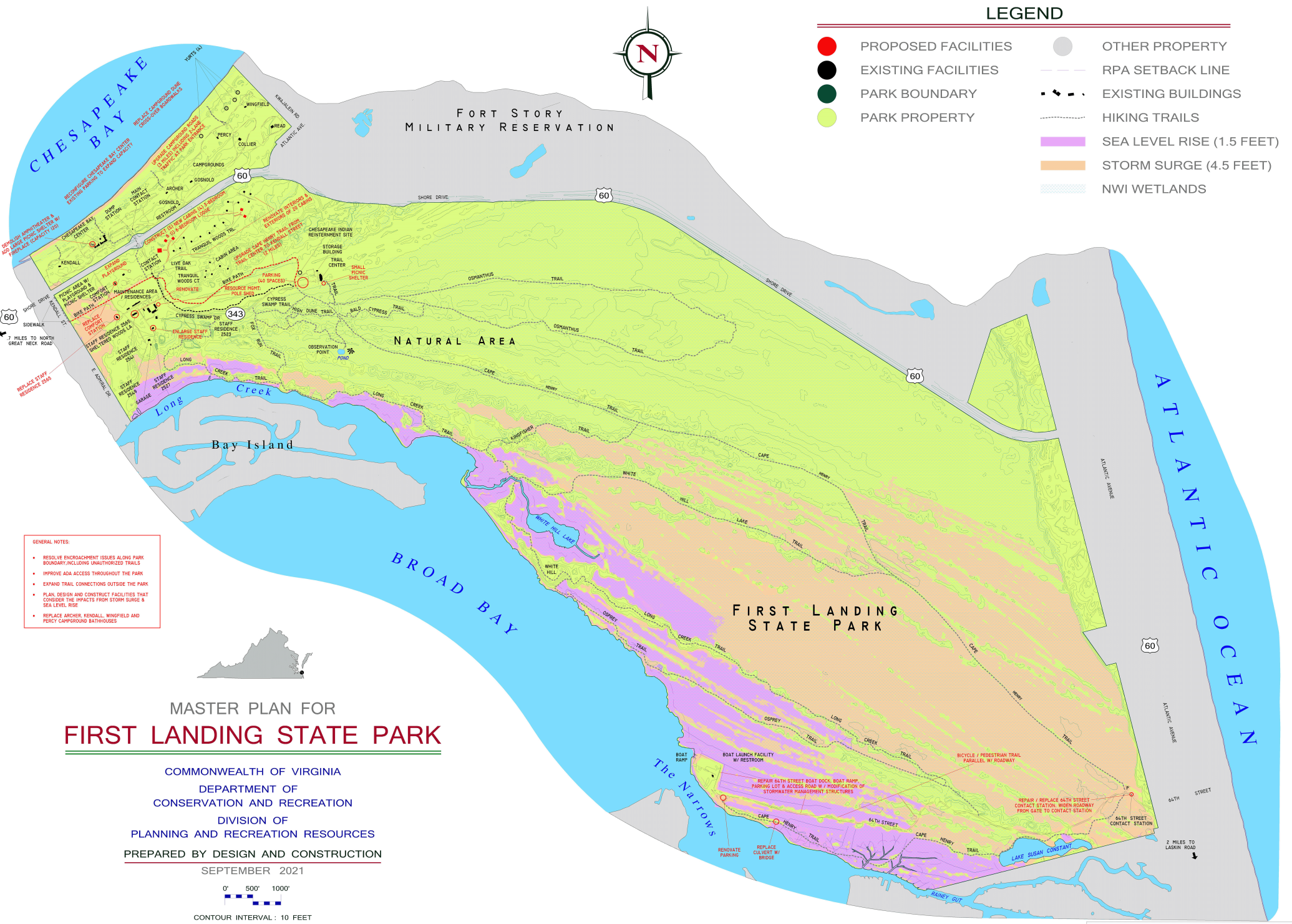
EXISTING STAFF FY22	STAFFING MATRIX	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	FULL BUILD OUT
<b>STAFFING</b>					<b>PARK STAFFING</b>
Park Manager					Park Manager
Assistant Park Manager (2)					Assistant Park Manager (2)
Chief Ranger	Chief Ranger Natural Resources				Chief Ranger (2)
Visitor Experience Chief Ranger					Visitor Experience Chief Ranger
Park Ranger (4)	Park Ranger	Park Ranger			Park Ranger (6)
Office Manager					Office Manager
	Business Manager/Special Events Coordinator				Business Manager/Special Events Coordinator
	Park Ranger Interpretation				Park Ranger Interpretation
	Housekeeping Manager				Housekeeping Manager
	Housekeepers (2)				Housekeepers (2)
	Maintenance Foreman				Maintenance Foreman
	Program Support Technician				Program Support Technician
	Volunteer/Trails Coordinator				Volunteer/Trails Coordinator
<b>SALARY TOTAL</b>					
\$846,177	\$868,141	\$75,953			\$1,714,318
<b>WAGE TOTAL</b>					
\$701,317		\$36,000	\$43,000	\$6,000	\$562,670
<b>OTPS TOTAL</b>					
\$774,764		\$44,000	\$33,000	\$6,500	\$873,628
<b>BUDGET TOTAL (FY21 dollars)</b>					
\$2,322,258	\$868,141	\$155,953	\$76,000	\$12,500	\$3,434,852

NOTE - All costs (salary, wage OTPS (Other than Personnel Services)) are based on FY21 budget projections

\* the state park staffing matrix identifies the staffing complement of a park based on size and resource, number and type of facilities, as well as types of programming and activities. The staffing complement will be re-evaluated with the addition of new facilities.

# LEGEND

- PROPOSED FACILITIES
- EXISTING FACILITIES
- PARK BOUNDARY
- PARK PROPERTY
- OTHER PROPERTY
- RPA SETBACK LINE
- EXISTING BUILDINGS
- HIKING TRAILS
- SEA LEVEL RISE (1.5 FEET)
- STORM SURGE (4.5 FEET)
- NWI WETLANDS



- GENERAL NOTES:**
- RESOLVE ENCROACHMENT ISSUES ALONG PARK BOUNDARY, INCLUDING UNAUTHORIZED TRAILS
  - IMPROVE ADA ACCESS THROUGHOUT THE PARK
  - EXPAND TRAIL CONNECTIONS OUTSIDE THE PARK
  - PLAN, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT FACILITIES THAT CONSIDER THE IMPACTS FROM STORM SURGE & SEA LEVEL RISE
  - REPLACE ARCHER, KENDALL, WINGFIELD AND PERCY CAMPGROUND BATHHOUSES



## MASTER PLAN FOR FIRST LANDING STATE PARK

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION  
DIVISION OF  
PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES  
PREPARED BY DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

SEPTEMBER 2021



CONTOUR INTERVAL : 10 FEET

FIRST LANDING STATE PARK IS 2,716 ACRES  
LOCATED IN CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA.