



ERM awarded State of Maryland contract to develop the Star-Spangled Banner Water Trails Plan

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ERM is leading a team of consultants selected to plan the water trails portion of the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail in Maryland, US. The trail was designated by the US Congress in May 2008 as part of the National Trails System.

The work will include developing access, stewardship and interpretive opportunity plan for the water trails. Water trails are designed to be used by a variety of recreation vessels including sailboats, powerboats, and paddlers, as well as by commercial and educational tour operators. The trails will also include land-based sites with views of or access to the water.

The team will assess sites under a broad range of criteria and then develop a “gap analysis” identifying property acquisition, construction or other improvements that will be needed to create and interpret the water trails as a cohesive trails network. The assessment criteria will include historic integrity, interpretive potential, anticipated level of visitation, ease of access, proximity and connectivity to other sites, development feasibility, investment needed to improve the site and stewardship.

Among the final products will be ERM’s recommendations for the 10 highest priority capital investments needed to develop water trail segments, and a Water Trails Plan report that will serve as the framework for trail development improvements over the next 30 to 40 years. The Water Trails Plan is scheduled for completion by June 2010.

Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail

As part of the National Trails System, the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail is a network of scenic, historic, and recreation trails created by the National Trails System Act of 1968. The US Department of the Interior is the lead federal agency for the National Trails System. The National Park Service, an agency within Interior, is the lead agency for the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail.

The Trail will consist of water and overland routes totaling approximately 290 miles, extending from Tangier Island, Virginia, through southern Maryland, DC, and northern Virginia, in the Chesapeake Bay, Patuxent River, Potomac River, and north to the Patapsco River and Baltimore, MD, commemorating the Chesapeake Campaign of the War of 1812 including the British invasion of Washington, DC and the Battle of Baltimore in summer 1814.

The team of consultants headed by ERM will plan the water trails portion of the Trail in Maryland, which will also incorporate sites from 1812 and 1813. Approximately 200 potential trail sites have already been identified. ERM’s client is the Maryland State Department of Business and Economic Development’s

Division of Tourism, Film and the Arts, which also serves as staff to the Maryland War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission. This Commission, established by Maryland Governor O'Malley in 2007, is planning a multi-year cultural tourism and educational initiative to commemorate Maryland's unique contributions to the defense and heritage of the United States.

Winning bid

ERM was selected from among eight teams that submitted separate technical and cost proposals in response to a widely-advertised Request for Proposals. ERM's proposal was praised for its outstanding technical quality which over-rode cost considerations. ERM's work will be conducted by planners from our Annapolis, MD, office. Principal in charge is David Blaha. Key staff include Michael Bayer, Clive Graham and Benjamin Sussman.

The consulting team being lead by ERM includes members from Toole Design Group and Ayers Saint Gross. Toole Design Group is a planning, design and engineering firm based in Hyattsville, MD with a national reputation in bicycle and pedestrian, trail and greenway planning. Ayers Saint Gross is an internationally-recognized architecture and design firm headquartered in Baltimore specializing in campus planning, cultural facilities, landscape architecture, signage and wayfinding, and graphic design. Historian Dr. Ralph Eshelman, is a specialty sub-consultant to ERM for this project. He is senior author of *The War of 1812 in the Chesapeake: A Guide to the Historic Sites of Maryland, Virginia and District of Columbia* to be published by Johns Hopkins University Press.