

Department of Historic Resources

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For Immediate Release

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***Please note:** This press release was **corrected** Dec. 18 to reflect that an archaeological survey of the Eastern Shore will be conducted by Chesapeake Watershed Archaeological Research. The original release incorrectly stated that survey would be undertaken by Longwood University archaeologists and students. Press release re-posted Dec. 18, 2015.*

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VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES TO PARTNER WITH NORTHERN NECK, TIDEWATER & EASTERN SHORE LOCALITIES TO CONDUCT SURVEYS OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

*—Projects are with the counties of Accomack, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex,
Northampton, Northumberland and Westmoreland;
and the Towns of Colonial Beach, Saxis, and Surry—*

RICHMOND – The Virginia Department of Historic Resources has awarded funding for nine projects that will survey historic architectural or archaeological resources in seven counties and three towns in the Tidewater and Eastern Shore that were impacted by Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

The pass-through project funds derive from a \$1.5 million Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Assistance Grant for Historic Properties that the National Park Service awarded in 2014 to the Commonwealth of Virginia by way of the Department of Historic Resources (DHR). The grant allows DHR and jurisdictions to fund projects that support disaster planning by increasing knowledge about storm-related damages to known historic properties, districts, and archeological sites, and further plans to make them better able to rebound from adverse impacts arising from future storms and sea surges or events related to climate change.

The jurisdictions receiving the project awards—specifically the counties of Accomack, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northampton, Northumberland, and Westmoreland—are among a list of Virginia counties the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identified as eligible for the federal relief funds in the aftermath of the massive 2012 hurricane. Virginia was one of 12 eastern states in addition to Washington, D.C., where Hurricane Sandy left a path of damage and destruction in late October of 2012.

Three of the projects receiving grants will concentrate on updating existing information on historic architectural resources in DHR's files and database or newly document such resources in the two counties of the Eastern Shore (Accomack and Northampton), three counties of the Northern Neck (Northumberland, Lancaster and Westmoreland), and in Middlesex County. In each case the firms hired to conduct the surveys will also cap the work with a survey report that discusses the historic context of sites and offers recommendations for future measures to bolster preservation of historic and threatened architectural resources.

It is anticipated these reconnaissance-level surveys will update or newly document 500 properties in the two counties of the Eastern Shore, 275 properties in the three counties of the Northern Neck, and 375 properties in Middlesex County.

Two other projects will concentrate on surveys of shoreline archaeological resources on the Eastern Shore and in Middlesex and Mathews counties. Archaeological sites identified will be added to DHR's files and GIS-based database. It is the hope and expectation of the counties and DHR that these surveys will raise awareness about the location and significance of archaeological sites and aid in their future protection. The Eastern Shore surveys of Accomack and Northampton counties will be conducted by Chesapeake Watershed Archaeological Research. The surveys of Middlesex and Mathews will be undertaken by archaeologists and students from Longwood University.

A separate project also slated for Mathews County will entail an architectural survey of an anticipated 200 properties as well as documenting 50 cemeteries. Additionally, the project will assemble preliminary information for presentation to DHR about five properties that are likely eligible for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) and the National Register of Historic Places. .

Two other projects will involve the towns of Surry (Surry County) and Saxis (Accomack County). In Saxis, located on Pocomoke Sound in the northern Chesapeake Bay, an architectural survey will be conducted of an anticipated 200 properties within a proposed historic district and a nomination form prepared with the goal of listing the district in the VLR and the National Register. For Surry, a nomination form for 152 properties previously surveyed will be prepared for listing a town district in the state and national registers. The Surry project will also include drafting of a natural disaster management plan for select historic resources.

A survey project in Colonial Beach in Westmoreland County will document an anticipated 85 properties within a previously proposed historic district. The project also will present preliminary information to DHR for possibly moving ahead with a formal nomination to list a town historic district in the state and national landmark registers.

Here is a summary of the projects with additional information; each project must be completed by March 2017:

- **Town of Colonial Beach:** A reconnaissance survey will be conducted of 85 properties within a previously proposed historic district and preliminary information prepared for moving forward with a formal nomination of the historic district.

Additional Information: The proposed district is roughly bounded by Colonial Avenue to the south, Washington Avenue to the east, Boundary Street to the north, Lossing Avenue to the east, Thackary Street to the north, Irving Avenue South to the west, and Beach Terrace to the west up to Colonial Avenue. Surveyors will document representative properties in the proposed district and the information will be entered into DHR's online data base and inventory of historic sites. After the survey is wrapped up, an assessment of the historic district will be completed, including recommended boundaries for a district, its period of significance, and determining contributing and non-contributing buildings in the proposed district. DHR awarded the project to Dovetail Cultural Resources Group.

- **Accomack and Northampton Counties:** A reconnaissance survey of 500 properties will be conducted and a survey report completed with recommendations for future work.

Additional Information: A number of communities on the Eastern Shore are listed on the VLR and the National Register. However, the majority of DHR's existing survey information is outdated or does not meet current survey standards. It is anticipated the project will update or newly document information on about 500 properties on the Eastern Shore. DHR and local representatives will consult on properties to be surveyed in collaboration with the firm hired to carry out the work. Priority will be given to properties in areas threatened by rising sea levels and other indicators of climate change. A capstone summary report will offer historic context and recommendations for future work. DHR awarded the project to Cultural Resources Analysts, Inc.

- **Mathews County:** A reconnaissance survey of 200 properties and 50 cemeteries will be conducted. Additionally, preliminary information will be gathered and presented to DHR for the potential listing of five properties on the VLR and the National Register.

Additional Information: The project will identify 200 individual properties and 50 cemeteries in the most threatened areas of Mathews County. The survey area will include parts of the county most prone to damage from flooding, high winds, and other-storm related effects. The project will also include the preparation of five Preliminary Information Forms (PIFs) for thematic groups or geographically distinct communities to assess their eligibility for listing on the VLR and the National Register. Potential groups or locations for study and PIF preparation include Fitchett's Wharf, the town of Mobjack, Mathews Downtown area, the African-American community in and around Antioch Church, and commercial, civic, and maritime-related resources and buildings. DHR awarded the project to Data Investigations, LLC.

- **Middlesex County:** A reconnaissance survey of 375 properties will be conducted and a survey report completed with recommendations for future work.

Additional Information: A number of properties in Middlesex County are listed on the VLR and the National Register. But the majority of DHR's existing survey information is outdated or does not meet current survey standards. The project will update or newly document information on an anticipated 375 properties in Middlesex County. DHR and local representatives will consult with the independent firm doing the work to determine properties to survey. Priority will be given to historic properties in areas threatened by rising sea levels and other indicators of climate change. The project will be capped by a summary report discussing historic contexts and recommendations for future work. DHR awarded the project to Cultural Resources Analysts, Inc.

- **Northern Neck:** A reconnaissance survey of 275 properties will be conducted and a survey report completed with recommendations for future work. The project will cover only three counties on the Northern Neck: Northumberland, Lancaster and Westmoreland.

Additional Information: A number of communities throughout the Northern Neck are listed on the VLR and the National Registers. However, the majority of DHR's existing survey information is outdated or does not meet current survey standards. It is anticipated that the project will update or newly document information on 275 properties ranging across the three counties. DHR and local representatives will consult with the independent firm doing the work to determine properties to survey. Priority will be given to properties in areas threatened by rising sea levels and other indicators of climate change. The project will be capped by a summary report discussing historic contexts and recommendations for future work. DHR awarded the project to Dovetail Cultural Resources Group.

- **Town of Saxis:** A reconnaissance survey of 200 properties will be conducted and a VLR and National Register form prepared for a town historic district.

Additional Information: The project will entail gathering architectural data for approximately 200 properties located within a proposed historic district, inputting the information into DHR's on-line data management system, and producing supporting documentation required for all survey projects. After the architectural survey is completed, a VLR and National Register nomination form will be completed. The nomination form will include a complete inventory of the historic district and designation of contributing and non-contributing buildings within the district, and a well-researched statement of significance that describes important historic trends and themes as expressed in the district's built environment. DHR awarded this project to Hanbury Preservation Consulting.

- **Town of Surry:** A nomination form for a previously-surveyed historic district will be prepared for listing the district in the VLR and National Register and a disaster management plan completed as well.

Additional Information: In July 2013, a proposed Town of Surry Historic District was recommended potentially eligible for listing in the VLR and the National Register. In November 2013, a hired consultant began completion of a reconnaissance level survey of 152 properties within the boundaries of the Town of Surry District. The survey includes final hard copy files for all properties within the district and supporting documentation, including photographs and site plans. The survey information was entered into DHR's online database. This project will draft a formal nomination to list the proposed district on the VLR and National Register. The project will also include intensive documentation of any storm related damage to interiors of buildings and recommendations on how to structurally stabilize three select buildings within the town of Surry. DHR awarded this project to Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson.

- **Archaeological Shoreline Survey, Middlesex and Mathews Counties:** The project entails a shoreline survey to identify archaeological sites or update existing information on such sites.

Additional Information: It is the mutual hope and expectation of the counties and DHR that this project will raise awareness about the location and significance of archaeological sites and aid in their protection. The Middlesex County portion of the project will run along the south bank of the Rappahannock River from the eastern mouth of Urbanna Creek at Bailey Point and around to Stove Point at the mouth of the Piankatank River. The Mathews County portion will extend from Kibble Pond at the North end of Gwynn Island and extend southward along the shore and terminate at New Point Comfort at the mouth of Mobjack Bay. Additionally, the Middlesex survey will be a 20% sample of shoreline based on a predictive model developed from a known site inventory for the shorelines plus other like resources and models based on topography, underlying geology, and soils. Potential impacts due to tidal action, sea level rise, and catastrophic storm surge will also be considered in survey area selection. Particular attention will be paid to assessing damage caused by Hurricane Sandy and all sites recorded with DHR will be assessed for damage. The Mathews County survey will primarily focus on assessing the current condition of previously recorded shoreline sites. New sites will also be recorded if observed while navigating between existing sites with special attention given to areas where severe erosion has occurred. DHR awarded the project to Longwood University.

- **Archaeological Shoreline Survey, Lancaster and Northumberland Counties:** The project entails a shoreline survey to identify archaeological sites.

Additional Information: It is the mutual hope and expectation of the counties and DHR that this project will raise awareness about the location and significance of archaeological sites and aid in their protection. The survey project will run from the northern boundary of Northumberland and Westmoreland counties south through Northumberland and Lancaster counties to the south and terminate at the Route 3 Bridge across the Rappahannock River. The survey will be a 20% sample of shoreline based on a predictive model developed from a known site inventory for the shorelines plus other like resources and models based on topography, underlying geology, and soils. Potential impacts due to tidal action, sea level rise, and catastrophic storm surge will also be

considered in survey area selection. Particular attention will be paid to assessing damage caused by Hurricane Sandy and all sites recorded with DHR will be assessed for damage. DHR awarded the project to Longwood University.

The Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Assistance Grant is a competitive grant program and each application was scored by DHR according to a pre-determined set of criteria. As these are reimbursement grants, all grantees must document and provide proof of expenditures and submit the same to recover eligible expenses.

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