

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Seashore State Park Historic District

other names/site number Seashore State Park, First Landing State Park, DHR Number 134-0099

### 2. Location

street & number 2500 Shore Drive ☐ not for publication  
city or town Virginia Beach ☐ vicinity  
state Virginia code VA county Virginia Beach (independent city) code 810 Zip 23451

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined ~~not~~ eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain), \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**Name of Property:** Seashore State Park  
**Location:** Virginia Beach (city), Virginia

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ private  
 \_\_\_\_\_ public—local  
  X   public—state  
 \_\_\_\_\_ public—Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

_____	building (s)
<u>  X  </u>	district
_____	site
_____	structure
_____	object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
8	34	buildings
6	7	sites
10	5	structures
0	0	objects
24	46	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	DOMESTIC	Sub:	camp
	COMMERCE/TRADE		restaurant
	COMMERCE/TRADE		department store
	RECREATION/CULTURE		outdoor recreation
	LANDSCAPE		park
	TRANSPORATION		road-related
	TRANSPORATION		pedestrian-related

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	DOMESTIC	Sub:	camp
	COMMERCE/TRADE		department store
	RECREATION/CULTURE		outdoor recreation
	LANDSCAPE		park
	TRANSPORATION		road-related
	TRANSPORATION		pedestrian-related

U. S. Department of the Interior  
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Name of Property: Seashore State Park  
Location: Virginia Beach (city), Virginia

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

MODERN MOVEMENT

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation BRICK, CONCRETE

Roof ASPHALT

Walls CONCRETE, WOOD: weatherboard

Other

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

X  A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

X  C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**U. S. Department of the Interior  
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**Name of Property:** Seashore State Park  
**Location:** Virginia Beach (city), Virginia

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

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<b>Period of Significance</b>	1933-1942
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<b>Significant Dates</b>	1933—creation of Civilian Conservation Corps
	1942—elimination of Civilian Conservation Corps

1942—elimination of Civilian Conservation Corps

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**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

<b>Cultural Affiliation</b>	N/A
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N/A

<b>Architect/Builder</b>	CEGG Associates LC
	National Park Service
	Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development
	A. C. Barlow
	Mattern and Mattern

CEGG Associates LC

National Park Service

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Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development

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A. C. Barlow

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## Mattern and Mattern

**See Continuation Sheet for other Architects**

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary Location of Additional Data

X State Historic Preservation Office.

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Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

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Other

Name of repository:

U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Name of Property: Seashore State Park  
Location: Virginia Beach (city), Virginia

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property 2889

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	405722	4086224	3	18	409120	4086446
2	18	406937	4087159	4	18	411121	4085735

X See continuation sheet.

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: Kimble A. David, Architectural Historian

Organization \_\_\_\_\_ date: 31 July 2005

street & number P. O. Box 7638 telephone 757/623.3456

city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23509

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Department of Conservation and Recreation

street & number 203 Governor Street, Suite 302 telephone 804/786.1712

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Virginia Beach (city), Virginia**

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**Architectural Description**

**Summary Architectural Description:**

Seashore State Park Historic District is a 2889-acre park situated in Virginia Beach, Virginia on the Chesapeake Bay at Cape Henry. The park is divided by State Road 60, which partially bounds the park on the north. The area along the Chesapeake Bay, north of State Road 60, is occupied by the campgrounds and the current administration office. The area along the bay maintains the sand dunes, which have mostly been removed to either side of the park. To the south of State Road 60 is a majority of the lands associated with the park. This area is swampland and reflects the natural beauty of what was originally called "the Desert". This area features cypress and live oak trees along with the extensive trail system developed during the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)-era. At the southeast end of the park is a boat ramp and secondary beach along Linkhorn Bay at the Narrows. Within the main body of the park are five CCC-era overnight cabins. The most notable feature of the park is the landforms, trails and natural beauty. Seashore State Park is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C for its association with the CCC and state park development in Virginia, and its integrity of design in its park plan and buildings.

**Architectural Description:**

Seashore State Park was initially planned in 1929 as a companion park to the National Park Service's (NPS) Shenandoah Park, which highlighted the mountain region of the state. It was believed that a park on the Atlantic Ocean would be a good companion to highlight Virginia's varying topography. Seashore State Park was originally open space primarily used for timbering by Camp Manufacturing Company and provided a large forested space for the location of a park that exemplified changes to Virginia's geological makeup.

The lands within Seashore State Park are swamp comprised of sandy soil with organic material that has been built up from the foliage and trees within the area. The park terrain varies with approximately a twenty-five-foot grade with numerous hills and low lying areas. The trails dominate a major part of the park primarily south of State Road 60. Public areas focus on the waterfront with the campgrounds situated along the dunes on the Chesapeake Bay. The cabin area is situated on the south side of State Road 60 in a seclude area of the park away from the trails and camping areas.

Unlike park planning proposed by the NPS, Seashore State Park had a unique terrain and was primarily dictated by a pre-existing State Road connecting the oceanfront and bay front areas. The area on the north side of the roadway is maximized with the location of the main park office in the Big "H"

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Complex, a parking area for beach access, and the campgrounds.

The Big "H" Complex is a half-timbered building constructed during the CCC-era (1933-1942) for the use as a restaurant and administration building. It has a complex roofline of cross gables. The building now serves as a laundry, administrative offices, and a visitor center. To the north of the complex is an amphitheater and gazebo for community programs. These were added circa 1990.

The campgrounds are situated east and west of the Big "H" Complex. They are comprised of one-way asphalt-paved roadways that loop around the main campgrounds. There is a circa 1967, 1990 or 2005 lavatory at the center of each campground. The terrain in the campground varies from blackwater swamp to low hills overlooking the dunes. Campsites are accessed from the main roadway and spurs are provided at the campsite for the parking of trailers and cars. Tent camping is not confined to specific delineated campground area, but is permitted in open areas near the marked site. Low ground cover and growth along with live oak trees divide the sites. Campsites occupy most of the lands within the campgrounds.

To the south of the State Road 60 at the park entrance, a connecting road was installed from the beachfront and camping areas to the trail area. This roadway meanders through the park terminating at the Visitor's Center and access to the trails. There are nine trails of 0.25 to 6 miles east of the Visitor's Center, which serves as their western terminus. In addition to the siting of the trail access, the south side of State Road 60 also is the location of the maintenance and staff residential areas. Off the main entrance road on the south side State Road 60 is the Picnic Area. The Picnic Area features a circa 1990 picnic shelter. To the south of the Picnic Area is the maintenance area off another minor roadway. To the south of the maintenance area are two residences, Residences 4 and 5. Adjacent to the maintenance area is the CCC-era bunkhouse, which is one of the few remaining CCC-era buildings in the park. At the end of the minor roadway is Residence 3. Perpendicular to this minor road is the original roadway that led to the CCC-camp, which was situated in the area where the maintenance area and Residences 4 and 5 are located. This roadway also connects the Superintendent's Residence with State Road 60 and maintenance area.

The Superintendent's Residence is located on one of the highest points within the park. Situated on a hill, the residence faces south away from the roadway and is isolated from the campgrounds, cabins and trails.

To the east of the access road on the south side of State Road 60 is the cabin area. There is a looped road that originally led to the CCC-era cabin area which is atop a hill. This roadway was later extended in the late 1940s for the addition of cabins constructed through the early 1950s. The CCC-

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era cabin area features six cabins, one of which replaces an early CCC-era cabin. The cabins are board and batten sided with complex roofs. A massive brick chimney is nestled into the wall. The cabins also feature screened porches due to the high instances of mosquitoes during warm seasons.

Cabins added to the extended roadway have similar features to the historic CCC-era cabins. These buildings are concrete block clad in board and batten siding. They are more isolated from each other than the cabins in the CCC-era cabin area.

The trail system dominates “the Desert” or main area of the park south of State Road 60. The trails have been cut through the swamplands and are mostly flat. They curve to avoid contact with the adjacent residential neighborhoods and roadways, and follow early logging roads. There are a number of timbered bridges that traverse especially large blackwater bogs.

At the west end of 64<sup>th</sup> Street there is park access for the boat ramp and beach area at the Narrows. In addition, there is access to some trails and the main bike trail, which is a former logging road. The roadway leads to the waterfront at the Narrows terminating at a parking lot. The boat ramp is located at the west end of the parking lot.

Inventory of Resources:

The following inventory of resources was conducted in 2005 and reflects resources that are contributing and non-contributing to the historic district.

**Circulation System**

The National Park Service provided consultation on the circulation system of the park along with the Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development. Unlike other parks, Seashore State Park has three entry points. The main entrance to the beachfront area is situated on the north side of State Road 60 east of the Big “H” Complex. This access point is for campers, registration and beachfront access. The secondary access point is located south of State Road 60 and intersects with the northern access route. The secondary access route gains access to the cabin area, hiking trails and Visitor’s Center. This lane also accesses the picnic area, maintenance area and staff residences. At the southeast end of the park at the west end of 64<sup>th</sup> Street is access to the boat ramp, piers and beach area at the Narrows. The circulation system is asphalt paved and planned to separate the various areas of the park according to function and access.

DHR Number 134-0099-0021

CONTRIBUTING (1 – structure)



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**Cabin Areas**

The cabin area is located on the east side of the roadway leading to the park on the south side of State Road 60. The CCC-era cabins are located atop a hill on the south side of the main cabin roadway. It is accessed by a gravel-paved loop off of the main roadway. The cabins are situated on the outside of the loop and are sited approximately fifty to seventy-feet from one another. These cabins overlook the lowlands of the park in this vicinity. Along the main roadway leading to the cabin area, there are cabins sited on the south side to its terminus. At the terminus there are cabins situated on the south side.

DHR Number 134-0099-0023, 134-0099-0067

CONTRIBUTING (1 – site)

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – site)

**Campground Area A and Campground Area B**

These campgrounds comprise the original planned camping areas at Seashore State Park. They are adjacent to one another and feed off a major one-way loop. The campgrounds are comprised of camp sites situated on either side of the one-way asphalt paved road. Parking areas are formed by spurs off the main road. Camping is permitted in the area of the site and sites are divided by low brush and live oaks. Within the campground areas, there are swamp areas. Bath houses are situated near the center of each loop.

DHR Number 134-0099-0024

CONTRIBUTING (2 – sites)

**Picnic Area/Campground Area E**

Campground Areas E was originally the CCC-planned picnic area. It exhibits an oval-shaped plan with parking spurs off the main loop. The picnic area was converted to a campground circa 1970. The bath house at the Picnic Area and later Campground Areas E was converted to a picnic shelter.

DHR Number 134-0099-0022

CONTRIBUTING (1 – site)

**Beach Areas**

There are two beach areas located within Seashore State Park. The main beach area is located on the Chesapeake Bay. This area is comprised of natural dunes and beachfront extending along the bay between the park boundaries. The secondary beach area is located on Linkhorn Bay near the Narrows.

It also provides a beachfront.

DHR Number 134-0099-0025

CONTRIBUTING (2 – sites)

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**Trail System**

The trail system is situated south of State Road 60 and comprises nine trails of 19.35 miles. The longest trail is six miles and the shortest is 0.25 miles. The trails wind through “the Desert” and feature the natural areas of bald cypress and live oak trees. The trails include a bicycle trail formed from an old logging road. This trail extends to the Big “H” Complex and terminates at the Narrows at the junction of Broad and Linkhorn Bays. It is part of the City of Virginia Beach’s trail system that begins at Kendall Street.

DHR Number 134-0099-0026

CONTRIBUTING (9 – structures)

**Big “H” Complex/Chesapeake Bay Complex**

Constructed in 1933-1934 during the CCC-era, this building served as the restaurant, kitchen and bath house for the park. Sited near bay and campgrounds it now serves as offices, a store, and storage. The building is brick and concrete block with wood framing to look like half-timbering. The foundation is concrete block and the roof is cross gable clad in asphalt shingles. The building is comprised of three portion divided by breezeways. In an L-shaped plan, it was damaged by fire in 1985 and most of the interior was removed and new materials were installed. The interior configuration also changed.

Windows have been replaced as well as doors. The building retains its character through its form and general appearance.

DHR Number 134-0099-0013

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**Superintendent’s House/Residence 1**

The Superintendent’s House is a one-story wood frame building erected on a brick foundation. It has an I-shaped plan with a main side-gabled centrally-located block intersected by two cross-gable blocks. The building is clad in board and batten siding and features a porch. Erected in 1933, it lies on the highest point within the park west of the main trail area and maintenance area.

DHR Number 134-0099-0017

CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**Cabins 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6**

These cabins are the original 1936 cabins erected at the park. There are sited on a looped roadway on the south side of State Road 60 in the vicinity of the maintenance area and main trail area. The cabin area is situated on a hill with the cabins sided around the loop. The cabins overlook the park landscape, though the view is obscured by trees. The cabins are wood frame resting on brick foundations and clad in board and batten siding. The footprint is a modified T-shape with a massive

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brick chimney nestled into the junction of the two gable blocks. The roof is complex clad in asphalt shingles with intersecting gable and gable over hip forms. There is an incorporated screened porch and deck on the opposite junction of gable blocks from the chimney. The windows are 1/1 metal double-hung sash replacements. The doors are single leaf.

DHR Number 134-0099-0003, 134-0099-0004, 134-0099-0005, 134-0099-0006, 134-0099-0008  
CONTRIBUTING (5 – buildings)

**Bunk House/Residence 2**

The bunk house was constructed in 1936 for park employees and is currently used for a similar function. At one point it was used as a single-family residence. It has a brick foundation and wood frame structural system clad in board and batten siding. The windows are 1/1 metal replacement and the doors are single leaf. The building has a rectangular footprint with a hipped roof clad in asphalt shingles.

DHR Number 134-0099-0018  
CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**Bath House Picnic Area / Bath House Campground Area E / Picnic Shelter**

This building originally functioned as a bath house for the picnic area. It was later converted to a bath house for Campground Area E in the late 1960s. The bath house's plan was dogtrot with men's and women's lavatories on each end. The lavatory areas have been removed and the building is open. The original brick piers supporting the massive hipped roof remain. The piers have a vertical emphasis with a recessed channel and feature Art Deco banding. Now used as a picnic shelter, this building was constructed in 1936 by the CCC. Due to the modification of this building and removal of lavatory areas, this building has been deemed a structure and is now considered non-contributing.

DHR Number 134-0099-0012  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – structure)

**Cabins 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20**

These cabins were erected in 1948. Originally exposed concrete block buildings, they were clad in the mid-1990s with board and batten siding. The buildings have two bedrooms, living room, kitchen and lavatory. They also have screened porches and wood decks. Locations of the cabins are addressed above. The cabins were remodeled in 1993 to include new kitchens, windows, and the application of board and batten siding.

DHR Number 134-0099-0027, 134-0099-0028, 134-0099-0029, 134-0099-0030, 134-0099-0031, 134-0099-0032, 134-0099-0033, 134-0099-0034, 134-0099-0035  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (9 – buildings)

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**Cabins 11, 12 13, 14, and 15**

These cabins were designed in 1950 and erected in the early 1950s. Originally exposed concrete block buildings, they were clad in the mid-1990s with board and batten siding. The buildings have two bedrooms, living room, kitchen and lavatory. They also have screened porches and wood decks. Locations of the cabins are addressed above. The cabins were remodeled in 1993 to include new kitchens and the application of board and batten siding. These cabins were designed by the architecture firm of Mattern and Mattern Engineers of Roanoke, Virginia.

DHR Number 134-0099-0036, 134-0099-0037, 134-0099-0038, 134-0099-0039, 134-0099-0040  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (5 – buildings)

**Cabin 5**

This cabin replaces a CCC-era cabin that burned down. Constructed circa 1990, this cabin features a concrete block foundation and is wood frame clad in board and batten siding. The building has two bedrooms, living room, kitchen and lavatory. It also has a deck. The location of the cabin is addressed above.

DHR Number 134-0099-0041  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**Campground Area C, D, F, G, and H**

Campground Areas C, D, F, and G were added between the Big “H” Complex and the original historic Campground Areas A and B along the Chesapeake Bay in 1967. Similar in plan to the original Campground Areas A and B, they feature a circular one-way loop with a bath house situated at the approximate center. Campground Area H is located west of the Big “H” Complex and was added at the same time as Campground Areas C, D, F, and G. It has a similar plan with a circular loop and centrally located bath house. The campgrounds were added due to an increased demand for camping at the park. DHR Number 134-0099-0042

NON-CONTRIBUTING (4 – sites)

**Indian Burial Site**

In 1999 Indian remains were interred at Seashore State Park near the Visitor’s Center on the south side of State Road 60. The site is circular and marked with a fence enclosure. There is a plaque denoting the reburial.

DHR Number 134-0099-0043  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – site)

**Campground Area A and B Bath Houses**

These buildings are concrete block with asphalt-shingle-clad hipped roofs.

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DHR Number 134-0099-0044, 134-0099-0045

NON-CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

**Campground Area C, D, F, G, and H Bath Houses, and the Narrows, Picnic Area, and Trail Area Bath Houses**

These bath houses were constructed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and have rectangular plans. Men's and Women's facilities are located at each end of the building and the center is either occupied by a breezeway in a dog trot plan or a storage closet. They are concrete block with hipped roofs. Some feature monitor roofs and gable over hip roofs. The bathrooms at the Narrows and Trail Area have a concrete block brise-soliel sheltering the lavatory entrances. The Bath Houses in Campground Areas have dog trot plans and were constructed in 1967, 1996, or 2000. The Picnic Area bath house is a simple rectangular building.

DHR Number 134-0099-0046, 134-0099-0047, 134-0099-0048, 134-0099-0049, 134-0099-0050, 134-0099-0051, 134-0099-0052, 134-0099-0053

NON-CONTRIBUTING (8 – buildings)

**Picnic Area**

The picnic area is situated west of the main entrance road on the south side of State Road 60. The picnic shelter is situated at the south end along the parking lot.

DHR Number 134-0099-0054

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – site)

**Picnic Shelter**

The Picnic Shelter dates to circa 1990 and is a wood frame building with open sides and a gable roof. The flooring is poured concrete.

DHR Number 134-0099-0055

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – structure)

**Contact Stations**

There are two contact stations situated at Seashore State Park on either side of State Road 60 at the park's main entrances. They are wood frame clad in pressure treated wood siding. The roofs have shed and gable forms with sliding metal windows. Each contact station is situated in the middle of the roadway.

DHR Number 134-0099-0056, 134-0099-0057

NON-CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

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**Equipment Buildings**

There are two equipment buildings on the site of the CCC-era (1933-1942) maintenance area to the west of the park entrance on the south side of State Road 60. These buildings are large metal framed shed-type buildings constructed circa 1990. They are enclosed within a fenced area.

DHR Number 134-0099-0058

NON-CONTRIBUTING (2 – buildings)

**Residence 3/Chief Ranger's Residence**

Constructed in 1972, this building is wood frame clad in pressure treated wood siding. Resting on the concrete slab foundation, the building features a side gable roof clad in asphalt shingles. The windows are 1/1 metal double-hung sash and the main entrance is single leaf. There is a brick chimney at the south end of the building.

DHR Number 134-0099-0059

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**Residence 4**

This building was erected in circa 1979. It has a concrete block foundation clad in brick veneer and is metal frame clad in vinyl siding. The roof is side gable clad in asphalt. The windows are 4/4 metal double-hung sash. This is a prefabricated building comprised of two identical sides that have been attached.

DHR Number 134-0099-0060

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**Residence 5**

This building is a single-family dwelling constructed circa 2000. It features a concrete block foundation clad in brick veneer. The building is wood frame clad in board and batten siding. The side gable roof features an intersecting gable on the west end. There is an incorporated porch at the northeast corner. An ell marks the southeast corner.

DHR Number 134-0099-0061

NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**Superintendent's Garage**

In 1989 the original Superintendent's Garage constructed by the CCC workforce burned in a fire and was replaced by the current garage. The garage is wood frame clad in board and batten siding. The roof is side gable clad in asphalt shingles. There are 6/6 wood double-hung sash windows punctuating the walls.

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DHR Number 134-0099-0062  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**Trail Center/Visitor's Center**

The Trail Center is a circa 1980 addition to the park. It features a concrete slab foundation and wood frame structural system clad in pressure treated lumber. The roof is hipped clad in asphalt shingles. The Trail Center is situated near the trail access.

DHR Number 134-0099-0063  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – building)

**Amphitheater**

There is a concrete block amphitheater north of the Big “H” Complex at the dune line. It has a circular plan with concrete seating.

DHR Number 134-0099-0064  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – structure)

**Gazebo**

Southeast of the Amphitheater is a concrete block gazebo. It has an octagonal-shaped plan and roof. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles.

DHR Number 134-0099-0065  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – structure)

**Boat Ramp**

At the west end of the Narrows parking lot is a poured concrete boat ramp. It features concrete curbing. The ramp descends from the parking lot into the water.

DHR Number 134-0099-0066  
NON-CONTRIBUTING (1 – structure)

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**Statement of Significance**

**Summary Statement of Significance**

Seashore State Park was the first planned state park within the Virginia State Park system. The state park system developed out of advancement of the National Park system through the creation of the New Deal Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program. Prior to the enactment of the federal legislation authorizing the establishment of the CCC, Virginia had planned six parks throughout the state and had initiated acquisition of the lands and sought funding and support for their creation. The availability of the CCC to provide funding and a workforce to develop the state parks was a fortuitous opportunity that not only created state parks across the country, but also recreational facilities, reforestation projects and other public works projects, while providing employment for the nation's poor during the Great Depression. The park was planned and designed in consultation with the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development and the National Park Service (NPS). The Park Service provided architectural drawings and plans, as well as park plans that had been developed for the National Parks. At Seashore State Park, three CCC camps of 200 men each provided construction labor, one of which was a camp of African-American corpsmen. Developed between 1934 and 1942, Seashore State Park has a number of remaining CCC-era buildings and retains its original development plan. The park, comprised of 2889 acres, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C for its association with CCC park development project and as the first park planned in Virginia, and its park plan, respectively.

**Seashore State Park—Early History**

On April 26, 1607, the first English Colonists arrived on the shores of Cape Henry and made landfall after their arduous trip across the Atlantic Ocean to establish a colony in the Americas. Their stop at the south bank of the 12 mile wide opening of the Chesapeake Bay marks the first English landing recorded in the United States. They sent out a landing party who noted that the site was inadequate for establishing a permanent colony. Prior to their departure on April 29, the colonists erected a cross to commemorate their safe arrival at the land they had named Cape Henry.

The mouth of the Chesapeake Bay was difficult to defend and pilot due to its broad opening, and no permanent fortification was established until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay provided a main water-route to the inland settlements, it became important to ensure that safe passage was afforded to vessels traveling through the mouth of the Bay. Piloting the waterway was precarious due to the shifting sand dunes, mudflats and shoals. In 1720 Governor Alexander Spotswood made the



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suggestion of erecting a lighthouse at Cape Henry. Subsequent requests for a lighthouse in 1752 by Thomas Lee, who was a native Virginian and acting as governor, persuaded the General Assembly to approve its construction. Taxes were levied on commerce from abroad of two pence per ton of a ship's cargo. The tax was rescinded in 1759 due to the belief that it impeded the tobacco trade. Finally in 1772 the Virginia General Assembly funded a lighthouse at Cape Henry and sandstone was quarried for its erection at Aquia. The outbreak of the Revolutionary War postponed the erection of the lighthouse until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>

After the Revolutionary War, the new federal government took over the lighthouse project that had been postponed by the General Assembly due to the outbreak of the Revolution. The Commonwealth of Virginia ceded two acres for the construction of the lighthouse to the federal government. The US Congress appropriated \$15,200 for its erection and construction began shortly thereafter.<sup>2</sup>

With the completion of the lighthouse shipwrecks continued to be frequent on the shoals of Cape Henry. In response to the continued destruction of naval vessels along the Atlantic Coast, the US Congress passed an act in 1871 to erect five lifesaving stations from Cape Henry along the Atlantic Ocean to the North Carolina boarder. The northernmost station was at what was called "the Desert" near the Cape Henry Lighthouse. The "Desert" was a maritime forest with swamps inland from the sand dunes. Cypress trees and other indigenous trees and fresh water springs, which provided firewood for fuel and water for travel. The "blackwater" in the marshes could be used for drinking since it contained tannins from the trees growing in the swamps that preserved drinking water for long voyages. The "Desert" provided fuel and water for travelers for the first three centuries from the establishment of settlements in coastal Virginia along the Chesapeake Bay.<sup>3</sup> This natural area was held by various landowners as early as the 1780s, but was used as public property from 1770 until after the Civil War due to its importance for sailors and watermen.

Additional building was made at Cape Henry in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, including a new lighthouse and Weather Bureau Station. The second lighthouse was added in 1881 due to the age and potential instability of the first lighthouse. It was feared that a strong storm would topple the aging structure. Plans were made in 1878 and Congress appropriated \$75,000 for the erection of the new lighthouse and in 1881 the new 150-foot lighthouse was completed. It had a granite base and cast-iron structural system clad in cast-iron plates. The Weather Bureau Station was erected in 1873 and was comprised of a masonry building, which served as quarters, and an observation building. This area was reserved as a US Coast Guard Station in 1939 within Fort Story, which was established in 1917 at Cape Henry.<sup>4</sup>

Fort Story was established at Cape Henry as importance of ports and military facilities increased at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. Interest in the site emerged as early as 1905 with the visit of future

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President William Howard Taft, who chaired a board for the study of establishing a fortification at Cape Henry. Appropriations for the facility were finally made in 1913 to acquire a 343.1-acre tract of land for “the purpose of erecting fortifications and other military purposes.” The fort was named for the recently deceased (1915) native Virginian General John Patten Story, Commanding Officer of Fort Monroe from 1902-1904 and a former commandant of the Artillery School.<sup>5</sup>

The area south of Fort Story known as the “Desert” was devoid of human occupation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and had been used by the timber industry. The land was sold in 1866 by an act of the Virginia Legislature to John M. Frazier and Thomas M. Hall. The parcel was described as having 5,254 acres. There were a number of subsequent owners of the tract until approximately half of it passed to the Cape Henry Park and Land Development Company in 1890. The company intended to develop a portion of the property and gave timber rights to the Camp Manufacturing Company. In 1899 lands were sold to the Cape Henry Syndicate who continued the use of the lands for timbering and quarrying of sand.

The Development of a State Park System in Virginia

The state park concept was an offshoot of the National Park system developed in the post-Civil War era. The first National Park created was Yellowstone National Park in 1872. Numerous national parks were developed in the west including Mount Rainer National Park in the state of Washington (1899), the Grand Canyon in Arizona (1908) and the Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado (1915). The formation of these parks was the impetus of the passage of the National Parks Act and the formation of the National Park Service (NPS) in 1916.<sup>6</sup>

State parks were initially created in the western United States for the purpose of “public use and recreation”.<sup>7</sup> The concept for the development of recreational parks was conceived as early at the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with the formation of public green spaces near urban areas. Remote recreational areas did not become popular destinations until the rise of the automobile era in the post-World War I era. Many people sought to escape the crowded urban areas in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but were confined by train travel and the destinations accessible by train. With the increased popularity of the automobile in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, auto-camping also became a fashionable recreation activity. Since there was a lack of camping locations, many people camped by the side of the road.<sup>8</sup>

While national parks had been conceived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a formal state park system was not formulated until the 1920s. The first two states to study the creation of a state park system were New York and California.<sup>9</sup> Also an increased demand on national parks led to the suggestion of creating

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state parks to help relieve the attendance at National Parks.<sup>10</sup> The first director of the NPS, Stephen Mather, is credited with the initiating a conference to encourage the formation of state park systems. In 1921 the first National Conference on State Parks was held to guide creation, management and protection of state parks. Of the twenty-five states represented at the conference, Virginia did not attend because it had not yet formed an agency for the creation of a state park system.<sup>11</sup>

In 1924 the Shenandoah National Park was established in the Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains. Two years later in 1926, Virginia legislation was enacted authorizing the establishment of a state park system and the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development was formed to create and administer a statewide park system.<sup>12</sup> The Commission's first chairman was William E. Carson, who was a successful businessman and park proponent. During his decade long tenure leading the Commission on Conservation and Development he saw the initial creation and development of the Virginia state park system.

In 1929 Carson conceived the first state park as a companion to the Shenandoah National Park on the Virginia coast celebrating the natural beauty of Virginia's varying geology.<sup>13</sup> With interest in creating a state park on the seashore developed in 1929, a resolution was recommended to hire a landscape architect and engineer to design parks for the newly created system. In June 1930, Robin (Bob) E. Burson was hired to study the park location in the east part of Virginia. Burson was a British-born horticulturalist and landscape designer living in southwest Virginia. His position was as the head of the Division of Landscape Engineering in the Department of Conservation and Development as a Landscape Engineer. His first task was to tour three other state park systems to document their formation and operation.<sup>14</sup>

In 1931 and 1932 Burson promoted the creation of a state park system in Virginia. During his promotional travels around the state he also searched for potential state park sites. In 1931 he attended the National Conference on State Parks in St. Louis, Missouri. Along with him were representatives from the proposed Seashore State Park. They returned to Virginia from the conference with a "broader vision of the real value of State parks." The following year in 1932, the conference was held in Virginia Beach at which representatives from various states attended the three-day conference. The site of the proposed Seashore State Park was used for meetings and presentations linking the history of the site as the first landing of English settlers and its natural setting for the creation of the park. The conference inspired the fledgling Commission on Conservation and Development to actively seek creation of a state park system.<sup>15</sup>

The goal of the state park system was not only to provide Virginians with recreational sites, but also to encourage tourism to Virginia. It was felt that the proposed parks reflect the various natural areas of

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Virginia and highlighted the varying geography of the state.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the parks functioned as companions to established or developing historic sites. By 1932 Burson had six park locations in mind as the foundation of the Virginia State Park system. Parks were located throughout the state to serve various regions. These proposed parks were: Seashore State Park and Westmoreland State Park in the Tidewater region, Staunton River State Park in the middle of the state, Fairy Stone State Park in the Virginia Piedmont, Hungry Mother State Park in the Valley of Virginia, and Douthat State Park in the mountain and valley region.

Civilian Conservation Corps and State Parks in Virginia

In 1933 The Emergency Conservation Work Act (ECW) was enacted as a part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. A portion of the ECW funding was allocated for the construction of public infrastructure and buildings. Shortly after the ECW's enactment, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was created to provide a workforce to fulfill the mission of the ECW. The CCC functioned as a mechanism to employ unemployed youth between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. These men enlisted in a CCC corps administered by the United States Army to work on public works projects including the creation of state and national parks.<sup>17</sup>

The establishment of the CCC solved two problems facing the United States. The first was to provide employment for young men who were unemployed during the Great Depression. It was found the young and old were the most problematic of those unemployed. In many cases the young, with no hope of employment, had "abandoned all pretenses to a settled existence, and simply taken to the road, traveling in freight cars or on foot, sleeping in caves or in shanty towns, aimlessly drifting in search of vanished security."<sup>18</sup>

The other major issue was the lack of conservation management of natural areas that had developed in the United States. Over harvesting of timber had caused severe erosion problems in one-sixth of the United States. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt believed he could solve these two problems with the CCC, which was employing young men and re-vitalizing the depleted environment. In addition to payment for services that the men were providing, they also received educational courses to make them marketable in the job market after their tours of duty. The initial employment of the CCC included two hundred and fifty thousand young men in the first year of its creation.<sup>19</sup>

The Department of Labor was assigned the oversight of the CCC and its operation on United States Army organizational concepts. Recruitment of young men between eighteen and twenty-five was conducted in many major cities throughout the county. Upon joining the CCC, men were immediately taken to a training camp to prepare them for their year-long tours.

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For the Virginia parks, once men were assigned to a CCC company, they were transported to the park in Virginia where they would work. The first CCC Company would be required to erect the camp where the young men would be living. The first company also was responsible to establishing a water system, digging wells as need for a fresh water supply. The first company was also required to build the maintenance buildings to be used of the fabrication of materials for the erection of the park buildings on site. In addition to building their own camp, the required maintenance buildings and water system, they also were required to build the roadways within the park. CCC companies would erect cabins, clear trails, and perform other landscape functions such as planting within the park.

CCC workers had a regimented daily schedule. Within the CCC camp there were barracks, a mess hall and an administrative building for the men hired to lead the workers in their projects. The CCC work days were scheduled much like the military with reveille, breakfast, lunch, dinner, education or recreation, and work. The day began approximately at 7:30 and ended at 4pm. After dinner, men could attend educational courses provided by teachers hired by the CCC or participate in recreational activities.<sup>20</sup>

With Burson's recommendations of park locations throughout Virginia and the available labor force through the CCC, Virginia was able to realize its plans for the creation of a State Park system. The first step for the creation of the park system was for the Commission on Conservation and Development to acquire lands on the proposed park locations. In addition to the acquisition of lands, a "Master Plan" had to be created for each proposed park to show the overall design and plan of each park.

Park and Building Design Concepts

The NPS undertook a new role during the New Deal era to include supervising the development of State Parks in emerging state park systems.<sup>21</sup> The availability of a workforce, planning and funds for the development of state parks systems led to an overwhelming demand from developing state park systems for NPS plans and CCC workforces.

The NPS had developed "Master Plans" plans for its parks which was a concept that began in the late 1920s as a part of comprehensive park planning. The NPS's Branch of Plans and Designs had first developed "General Development Plans". These plans showed existing development in the park as well as proposed additions and modifications. The new director of the NPS, Horace Albright, was so impressed with the "General Development Plan" concept that he asked Chief Landscape Architect, Thomas Vint, to prepare "General Development Plans" for each National Park.<sup>22</sup>

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The “General Development Plan” was renamed “Master Plan” in 1932 and was hailed as a useful tool in the creation and future planning of national and state parks. The “Master Plan” was not a firmly set plan but served as a basis for the initial construction and development of proposed parks. The function of the “Master Plan” as a guide gave the state park agencies and the NPS the ability to preserve the character of the landforms and scenery during the construction process and allow for the park’s development for recreational purposes. This flexibility supports the purpose of the NPS as outlined in the NPS Act of 1916;

*to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein  
and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as  
will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.*<sup>23</sup>

In addition to preserving the natural scenery and historic objects, the concept of the “Master Plan” allowed for the use of new design and construction methods during future development. The “Master Plan” was meant to be altered over time and was expected to be modified every one or two year interval at the NPS level.

The development of the “Master Plans” for state parks was through collaboration between the state park design representative or landscape architect, and the NPS design representative. In addition to the consultation of the NPS landscape and park designer, NPS engineers, horticulturalists and architects were consulted with on the concept of the park’s design.<sup>24</sup>

The Virginia State Park System sought to adequately represent the various regions of Virginia. The site selection was distributed through the state to represent the four largest physiographic regions of Virginia and exhibit the natural features of each region. NPS requirements for park size and surrounding population distribution were employed for park site selection. The parks were limited to a 1000-acre size minimum, and a surrounding area of fifty miles should have at least a population of 200,000 people. Other requirements included that the natural features of each park should include a body of water for swimming or bathing, or boating and fishing. Other considerations were the surrounding area of the proposed park and the visual impact to the natural areas of the parkland.<sup>25</sup>

The road system was an important design feature in the park system. The main access road was planned to be integrated into the existing road system in the region. The NPS worked with Virginia’s park planners in developing the roadways and circulation system of the park to emphasize and preserve the natural beauty of the park. In addition, the circulation system organized the park and connected the various areas to the main entrance. The impact of the roadways was to be minimal and blend in with

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the natural features of the park and also have a minimal impact to the existing landforms.

The road system was organized into major and minor roadways. The major roadways were comprised to the park's entrance road and roads leading to major recreational features in the park. The minor roads were spurs off the major road, did not connect to other roadways and terminated at dead ends. In addition, the minor roadways were not constructed to accommodate high levels of traffic and were designed to serve limited traffic flow. Examples of major roadways are the roads to natural areas, beach areas, lake areas, and the entrance road. Minor roadways are those leading to camping areas, cabin areas, and park residences.

The entrance road was the main access to the park and provided the first impression to the visitor. The planning of this roadway became the most important design feature of the road system. The road provided access to the park where stops would be made along the way to collect information, register for campsites or cabins, and access the natural recreational features provided at the park. The main access roadways of the circulation system provided a view of the natural features within the park in their planning. In addition, the entrance road was planned as a curving roadway that meanders to its terminus giving the overall feeling of connecting the visitor to the natural areas of the park. The first impression of the park and its associated buildings and natural areas were important in the planning process of the park.<sup>26</sup>

Park staff residences were situated away from the main public park area in a secluded area of the park near the entrance. They also were convenient to the park administration buildings and in a location where the park can be supervised by the staff assigned to it. The architecture of the buildings was in keeping with building design of the region and of the character of park's architecture. Since the public did not necessarily view the residence of the park staff it was important for it to at least maintain the overall feeling of the park. Various historical sources were also adapted for the design of the park staff residences.<sup>27</sup>

Administration and maintenance building design was given the same types of concerns as those of the park staff residences. While maintenance buildings would be situated in locations out of the public view, the administration building was a hub for the park and served as a headquarters for the park. Administration buildings could be combined with other functions, such as a community building, but specifically served as the location of conducting the park's business. The location of the administration building was key in establishing its prominence within the park. Usually located at the park's entrance, it served as the first contact with the park aside from the entrance road.<sup>28</sup>

In the CCC-era parks, maintenance buildings served originally as workshops for the park's

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development. Maintenance buildings were adapted after the completed construction of the park for its perpetual maintenance. Erected for a maintenance function, these buildings have minimal architectural details are usually clustered near the entry to the park. Over time the early buildings would have been replaced by modern facilities to accommodate changes in the technology of park maintenance.

The overall goal of the organization of cabin and tent campgrounds was to provide the visitor with a sense the natural area. The environment and planning of these areas was important to establishing the connection to the natural setting. The location of the cabins and campsites was purposely sited away from other public areas such as a community building, waterfront area or restaurant. NPS had developed park plans that separated these functions in a variety of settings, but as with master planning, the overriding thought was that the topography of the site would dictate the location of facilities and that the NPS guidelines were advisory only.

Cabin plans proposed by the NPS suggested an average distance between cabins of 50 feet. This distance was based upon the significance of privacy of the campers and was thought to be as important as clean and safe drinking water and adequate sewage. Like in NPS "Master Plans" the suggestion of 50 feet was a guide and not a fixed number. The topography of the site played a factor in the siting of cabins.<sup>29</sup>

Cabins were contained within a specific area on a minor road that usually dead-ended on a secluded site within the park. The cabins were placed within the cabin area to have partial exposure to the sun and shade during the day. One factor in the siting of the cabins was that they be exposed to morning sun so that bedding could be aired and sunned. Shade was desirable in the afternoon especially in warm climates.

Design of the cabins was a reflection on the character of the park and the available building materials. Rock was quarried from the site where available and timber was cut on site for clearance purposes and used to erect buildings. Cabin design sources were to be inspired by the region and of the pioneer era. Cabins were also designed to be modest in their amenities. Sleeping areas were compact and living space served multiple uses including dining and resting. Kitchens were to be modest and small in size and lavatories were be of similar scale. The layout of the cabin was to be compact as to not cause a costly building price.

In addition to the consideration of size, a cabin was to accommodate the average sized family of four to five persons. While in some cases cabins slept numerous people in one room, it was important to create private spaces through dividers and walls. Cabins were unheated, though fireplaces were a design feature that could be added in cabins if needed. While the cabins were to reflect the pioneer



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spirit, they presented more of an idyllic spirit of the pioneer era.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to cabins, camp sleeping facilities were provided at some locations, which sheltered campers. The rustic building provided cots and closets in addition to screened window openings. The facilities provided an alternative to campers who did not have tents but wished to sleep in a building that provided similar amenities to tent camping. These building forms were very basic and were comprised of an open space that could accommodate four cots and four closets. The buildings were approximately twelve feet wide by seventeen to twenty feet long. The exterior features were basic with numerous window openings to provide ventilation and light along with an entrance door and gabled roof.<sup>31</sup>

The plan of trailer and tent campsites had a specific goal of providing space for camping while preserving the parks from misuse. In the immediate post-World War I period, tent camping proved to be the most popular form of camping. By the 1930s, there was an increase in the number of campers towing trailers. By 1938 it was estimated that at some parks one-third of all campers were camping in trailers. With changes in camping, campsites were divided into separate areas for trailer campsites and tent campsites.

Tent campsites were comprised of a simple pull-offs or spurs on a main one-way loop with an adjacent tent site. The spur could accommodate a single car and gave the tent camper the flexibility to depart the site and return with convenience. Tent sites were comprised of a location for the pitching of a tent, fire-ring for the construction of a fire, and a seating area, such as a picnic table. Fire rings could provide a covering for cooking or a barbeque pit, depending on the site and location. Sites were divided by undergrowth at the fringe of the site creating a screen between campsites. A centrally located bath house was provided with men's and women's lavatories. Guidelines for the size of a campground were based upon distance to lavatories and other service. The NPS guidelines provided that clean drinking water was not more than 200 feet from a campsite, toilets should not be more than 400 feet from a campsite, and a washhouse and laundry facility not more than 1,500 feet from a campsite. In addition to designating distances of amenities within the campground, a campground should not be closer than 50 to 100 feet from the park entrance.

The use of trailers within campgrounds planned for tent camping proved to be a difficult adaptation. Limits in parking and the difficulty of backing trailers into sites planned for tenting provided for new design concepts in campground planning. Various solutions were available and specifically focused on the ease of parking the trailer within the site. Land use was the primary focus and incorporated into the proposed drawings with a range of plans. Some proposals provide longer parking spaces angled to the main one-way roadway through the campground. Other proposals provided an additional parking

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space within the campsite. In these plans the trailer was to be backed in to the site. Other sites were comprised of pull-through or pull-up sites in which the car towing a trailer could be pulled off the main campground roadway to its site. This plan was comprised of various alternatives in campground planning.<sup>32</sup>

An integral part of the park was the creation of a trail system which allowed visitors to view the natural beauty of the park. The main purpose of the park in addition to providing locations for sleeping was to provide recreation. The variety of recreation provided depended on the park. As parks were to be planned preferably near a body of water, the park could provide water recreation such as swimming, fishing and boating. These recreational activities required bath houses and the construction of piers and boat ramps. These buildings and structures were erected based upon the number of visitors expected at the park. The trails were developed based upon available land and accessibility of areas for hikers.

Through a collaborative effort the NPS was able to provide the Commonwealth of Virginia guidance in designing their original parks. The fortuitous creation of the CCC enabled the Virginia Park system to be constructed for continued use and enjoyment. The parks retain their original forms and plans though expanded over time as initially proposed as a part of the "Master Plan" process. Their main feature was the natural landforms and the human enjoyment of them.

The Formation of Seashore State Park

In the early 1930s Robin Burson traveled to other state park systems in effort to create a state park at Cape Henry. On 2 July 1931, the Virginia Seashore State Park Association was chartered in Norfolk. The goal of the group was to encourage the acquisition of lands for the creation of a state park at the Virginia seashore.<sup>33</sup> The site at Cape Henry had become a popular tourist attraction due to its association with the landing of the first settlers during this period and a park nearby could take advantage of the tourist traffic.

In addition, the park was highlighted for its geological time and land forms. The land within the park reflected the coastal changes from the prehistoric continental drift of African and North America. At the National Conference on State Parks held in Virginia Beach on 4-6 May 1932, the proposed park site was not only hailed for its association with the landing of the first English settlers, but for its geological evolution. Cape Henry is described as being a large sand spit formed by sand being moved by waves and shore currents northward. As the sand was pushed northward it formed a back swamp, which trapped shoal water between the main land and the oceanfront. Areas within the "Desert" have also been manipulated by wind and storms. The unusual nature of the "Desert" made it a unique

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geological feature to the area. With the land formations, the plant life also varied due to the location along the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay and is more in keeping with a southern climate.<sup>34</sup> The area within the "Desert" is known as being the northernmost point for plants that are indigenous to a southern climate.

On August 8, 1933, the Cape Henry Syndicate donated one thousand acres of land to the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development for the creation of Seashore State Park.<sup>35</sup> At the same time the Cape Henry Syndicate offered the remaining portion of the lands to the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development for the creation of the park for \$260,000.00. An appraisal conducted by the Commission yield that the property was valued at \$158,000.00. The remaining 2383 acres of land that make up the park were formally deed on October 2, 1934 upon receipt of the full price requested.<sup>36</sup>

Upon the opening of the park on April 27, 1936, six thousand people came to see the newly formed park. It also had 15,923 visitors the first season.<sup>37</sup> Seashore State Park became the second most popular park in the pre-World War II period and the most popular park in the post-World War II period.

CCC Camps at Seashore State Park

One CCC corps was initially assigned to Seashore State Park in October 1933.<sup>38</sup> Their first task was to build their own barracks. Between October 1933 and February 1934 two additional CCC corps had been added for a total of 600 young men working to improve the park. Initially the CCC workers were limited to working in the 1000-acre tract given to the state for the creation of the park until the final acreage was acquired in 1934. Prior to the acquisition, the corpsmen had cleared undesirable growth, cut in roads and trails, and built bridges over the marshlands on the trails. In addition they had constructed camp sites and landscaped the picnic grounds. They had also erected the Big "H" Complex and the six original cabins.<sup>39</sup> Upon the acquisition of the additional acreage, the corps was required to cut more trails through "the Desert". In 1937 ten miles of trails had been cut of the final 19.35 miles of trails that exist today.<sup>40</sup>

Companies of the CCC camps relocated from various regions of the country and some disbanded. With such a large project at Seashore State Park, an additional workforce was required. In 1935 1371<sup>st</sup> CCC Company was sent to Seashore State Park initially to work alongside Company 2306, which was disbanded shortly thereafter.<sup>41</sup> Other Companies sent to Seashore State Park were Companies 323, 1372 and 1287. Company 323 came from Yorktown in 1935.<sup>42</sup>

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Of the three CCC camps assigned to the work at the park, one was African-American. This camp was primarily comprised of African-American youth from Virginia.<sup>43</sup> There was great concern among nearby communities in regards to the placement of African-American camps within their midst. In addition, there was the pervading attitude that African-Americans were not interested in serving in the CCC. In some localities CCC recruiters turned away African American youth for enlisting.<sup>44</sup> It is noted that Norfolk and Richmond had recruited numerous African American youth to work for the CCC unlike more rural areas. Though these cities were recruiting African Americans most African American CCC camps came from Washington, DC, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York.<sup>45</sup>

Seashore State Park and Park Building Design Concepts

Unlike parks found in the mountainous or hilly regions of Virginia, Seashore State Park was situated on the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Colonial building forms of the pioneer era that remained during this period were primarily of brick construction, such as the Lynnhaven House and the Thoroughgood House. These buildings were modest one to one-and-one-half-story houses with end chimneys and smaller proportions. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, building forms that emerged on the waterfront in Virginia Beach were mostly shingled with low-pitched, hipped roofs and a horizontal emphasis. Timber was readily available for the cladding of wood frame buildings, and wood shingles were abundant from the small trees indigenous to the area.

Within the six proposed state parks in Virginia, Seashore State Park deviated from the popular log cabin form seen at the other parks. The cabin design is reflective of popular early 20<sup>th</sup> century forms. Unlike the log cabin, these buildings reflected a more simplified style indicative of a warmer climate. The building forms follow the cabin plans proposed by the National Park Service but their materials were more like those appointed to maintenance and public buildings. The Big "H" Complex with its half-timbering appears more rustic for an open site set apart from a forested backdrop. The character of these buildings deviates from the more wooded park settings found in the other parks around the state.

The Post CCC-Period to the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Modifications to the completed plan of Seashore State Park were not begun until 1942 with the acquisition of 727 acres by Fort Story for its development during World War II. In addition, increased attendance warranted the erection of addition of cabins and campgrounds. Between 1948 and 1950 fourteen additional cabins were added to the park making a complement of twenty-one cabins.

Shortly after the erection of the additional cabins, Seashore State Park was closed. The park closed

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from 1955 until 1962 due a class action suit filed by four African Americans who tried to enter Seashore State Park in 1951. They were turned away by park staff due to their race. This prompted a filing of a “class action” suit in the US District Court in Norfolk based upon the violation of the fourteenth Amendment Constitutional rights. The case lay dormant until 1955, by which time “Brown versus Board of Education, Topeka” had been decided and that segregation by race was unlawful. The determination in this case strengthened the argument in the Seashore State Park case and the Virginia Division of Conservation and Development was given an injunction that it either allows African Americans into the park or closes the park. Virginia opted to close the park and it formally closed in 1955.<sup>46</sup> Pressure to reopen the park began upon its closure. It was then only state park to close as a result of the court case filing. By 1961 the trail area had opened and the following year the campground opened.<sup>47</sup>

The popularity of Seashore State Park after it reopened in 1962 warranted to the addition of campsites. In 1964 75 additional campsites were added to the park<sup>48</sup> and by 1965 300 more sites were added in addition to a planned 100 additional sites in 1966.<sup>49</sup>

In the 1990s interest in changing the park’s name to reflect its historic significance associated with the first landing of English settlers resurfaced. In 1995 its name was formally changed to “First Landing State Park”.<sup>50</sup> Though discussions of the park’s name change originated from its initial creation, efforts were not actively sought until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

During the eleven years facility, the CCC workers had erected six cabins, cut in trails and roadways, constructed campsites, erected their own camp (which was dismantled), erected public buildings such as the restaurant, and constructed maintenance buildings for the park’s operation. Without the labor force provided by the federal government during the Great Depression and the CCC, Seashore State Park along with Virginia’s other five original state parks would have not been created for the public enjoyment. Seashore State Park continues to fulfill its function as a public recreation facility and retains integrity of building types, park plan and landscape features. The Seashore State Park Historic District is eligible under Criteria A and C for its association with the CCC and state park creation during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and for its park and building design, and landscape features.

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**Geographical Data (con't)**

UTM References (con't)

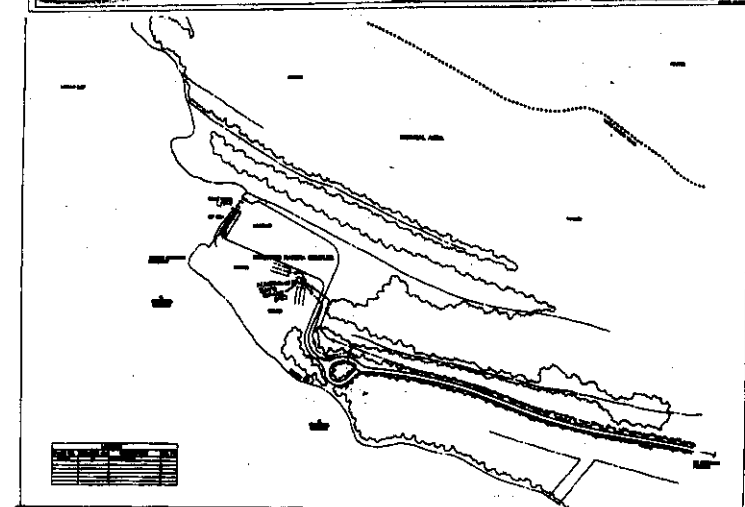
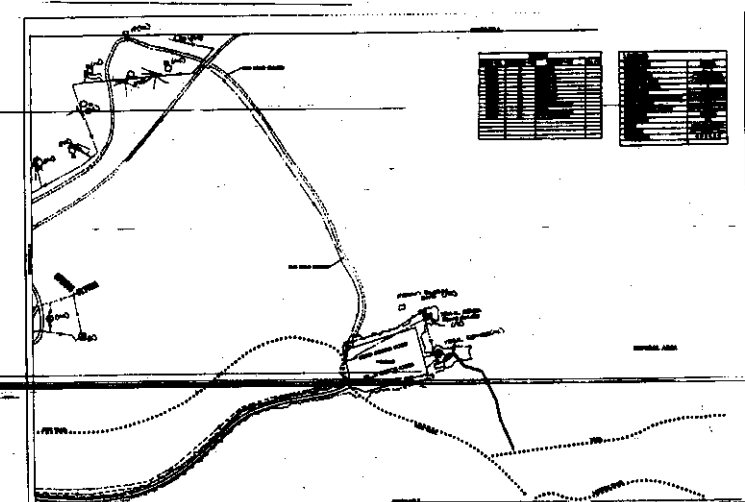
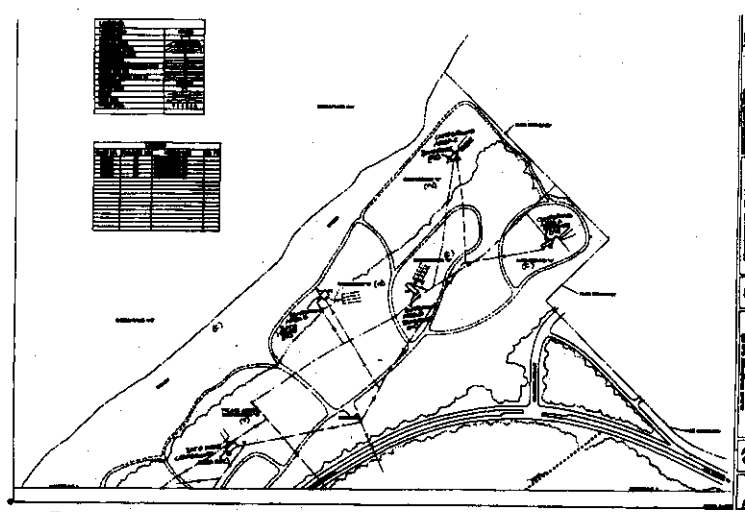
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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries are comprised of the current park boundaries. The north boundary is the Chesapeake Bay; the west boundary is privately owned lands; the south boundary is Broad Bay, Linkhorn Bay and private lands; and the west boundary is privately owned lands.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of Seashore State Park include lands acquired during the initial park formation. The area of the boundaries reflects the park's function and use as a recreational facility. In addition, the boundaries support the period of significance and the arguments presented in Section 8 of this nomination.



**Sunshine State Park  
Historic District**  
Virginia Beach (Independent city), Virginia  
CHRN Number 134-0086

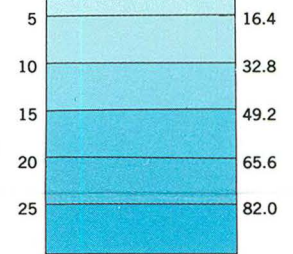
**National Register of Historic Places  
Boundary Map**

Not to Scale  
4 1/2"  
July 2005

Map  
Cadastral Resources  
(GPO) Non-exhaustive Resources

CHRN Boundary





Maximum depth

SEASHORE STATE  
PARK  
VIRGINIA BEACH (city)  
CAPE HENRY QUADRANGLE

- 1 18 405722E 4086224N
- 2 18 406937E 4087159N
- 3 18 409120E 4086446N
- 4 18 411121E 4085735N
- 5 18 411730E 4082906N
- 6 18 410419E 4082632N
- North Virginia Beach
- 7 18 410074E 4082764N
- 8 18 409403E 4083074N
- 9 18 406245E 4085335N

North  
Virginia Beach

OCEAN