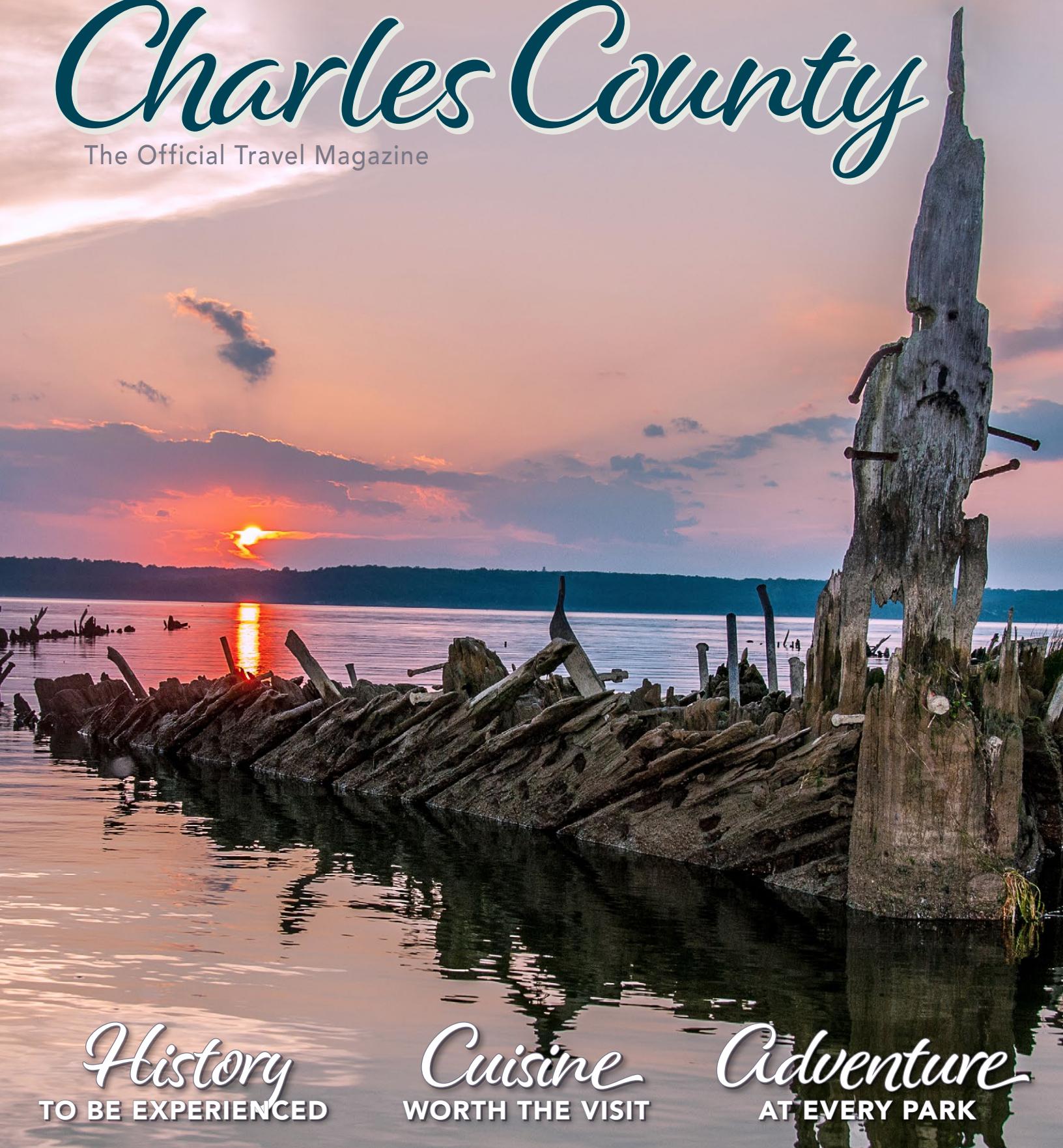


# DISCOVER *Charles County*

MARYLAND

The Official Travel Magazine



*History*  
TO BE EXPERIENCED

*Cuisine*  
WORTH THE VISIT

*Adventure*  
AT EVERY PARK

A Visit Filled with Legends, Lore and Room to Explore • [www.ExploreCharlesCounty.com](http://www.ExploreCharlesCounty.com)





# MAKE YOUR MEMORIES LAST A LIFETIME!

# EXPLORE

## CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND

Your legendary adventure awaits! Leave big-city traffic behind and set your GPS for a destination you'll want to bookmark for later — Charles

County, Maryland. Whether you're a history buff ([page 22](#)), an outdoor enthusiast ([page 16](#)), or you've got the itch to crack open some crabs ([page 8](#)), you'll find plenty to do (and eat) here. Let our idyllic country roads and expansive river views invite you to shed your responsibilities and explore with a renewed sense of awe and adventure.

WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE.

SCAN HERE:



## DID YOU KNOW?

Established in 1658, Charles County is **ONE OF THE OLDEST COUNTIES IN MARYLAND**.

The **LARGEST BLUE HERON ROOKERY** on the East Coast is right here in Nanjemoy, with over 700 nests! We also have the second-largest Bald Eagle population in the state.

Cobb Island, flanked by the Potomac and Wicomico Rivers, is one of the **SMALLEST ISLANDS IN MARYLAND**. Drive over the bridge for a seafood feast at Captain John's Crab House!

Waldorf used to be known as Maryland's **LITTLE VEGAS**. When gambling became legal in the 1950s, slots brought more money to the area than tobacco! Waldorf quickly became a hot spot for East Coasters and brought in big names such as Johnny Cash and Dolly Parton.

One of Charles County's many family-owned restaurants, Grille No.13 in Waldorf was featured on Chef Robert Irvine's Food Network show **RESTAURANT: IMPOSSIBLE**.

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# VISIT US ONLINE

## ExploreCharlesCounty.com

Head to our website for travel tips and ideas and receive up-to-date events and attractions when you sign up for our monthly e-newsletter.



Charles County  
MARYLAND

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### Interact with us on social media

Share your Charles County adventures using the hashtag  
**#ExploreCharlesCounty.**



Search for: Explore Charles County

### Get personalized help at our Welcome Center

Located on Route 301 in Newburg, the Crain Memorial Welcome Center is the perfect place to pull over and plan your Charles County adventures. The staff will help create your ideal itinerary with maps, brochures, and insider tips, while the illustrative exhibits showcasing area attractions will fuel your excitement for your stay. There is an ATM on site available during operating hours. The restrooms are open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. A car charging station is available in the parking lot on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Welcome Center is open every day of the week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Hours of operation are subject to change due to weather and/or Charles County Government closures.

**Crain Memorial Welcome Center**  
12480 Crain Highway • Newburg, MD  
301-259-2500

### Request more guides

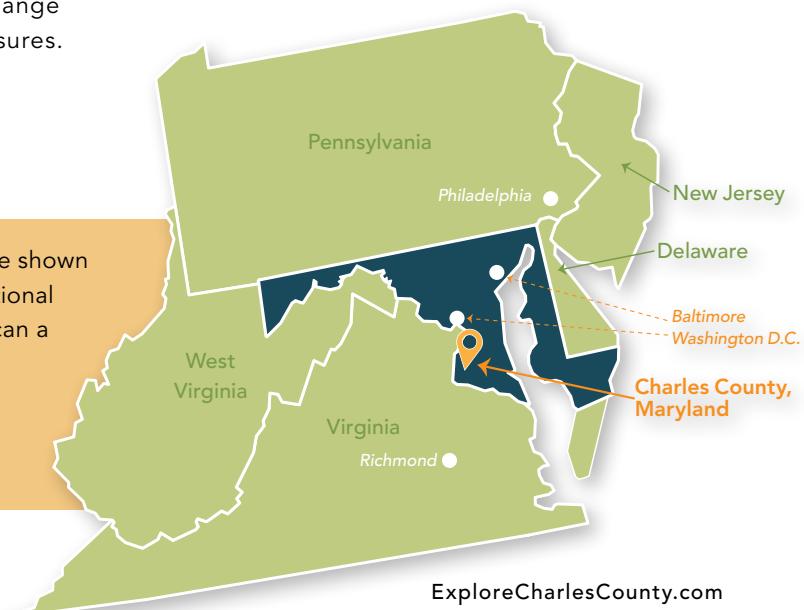
Download a digital or print version of our guide online at [ExploreCharlesCounty.com](http://ExploreCharlesCounty.com) or pick one up in person at the Crain Memorial Welcome Center.

### Getting here

An easy drive from major attractions in Maryland, Washington D.C., and Virginia, Charles County is an excellent destination for a variety of stays, from group tours, meetings, reunions, day trips, and overnight visits.

### Driving distance

- Richmond, VA — 75 miles
- Washington D.C. — 30 miles
- Baltimore, MD — 57 miles



Several features in this guide contain **QR codes** like the one shown at the top of this page. Our QR codes link to related inspirational stories and helpful tips on [ExploreCharlesCounty.com](http://ExploreCharlesCounty.com). To scan a code, open the camera app on your smartphone and hold it over the square.

*If your phone does not automatically scan this way, you can download a QR code reader app from the app store.*

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# Thank You!

Explore Charles County would like to thank our strategic partners for their support.

### Our Visitor Guide Covers

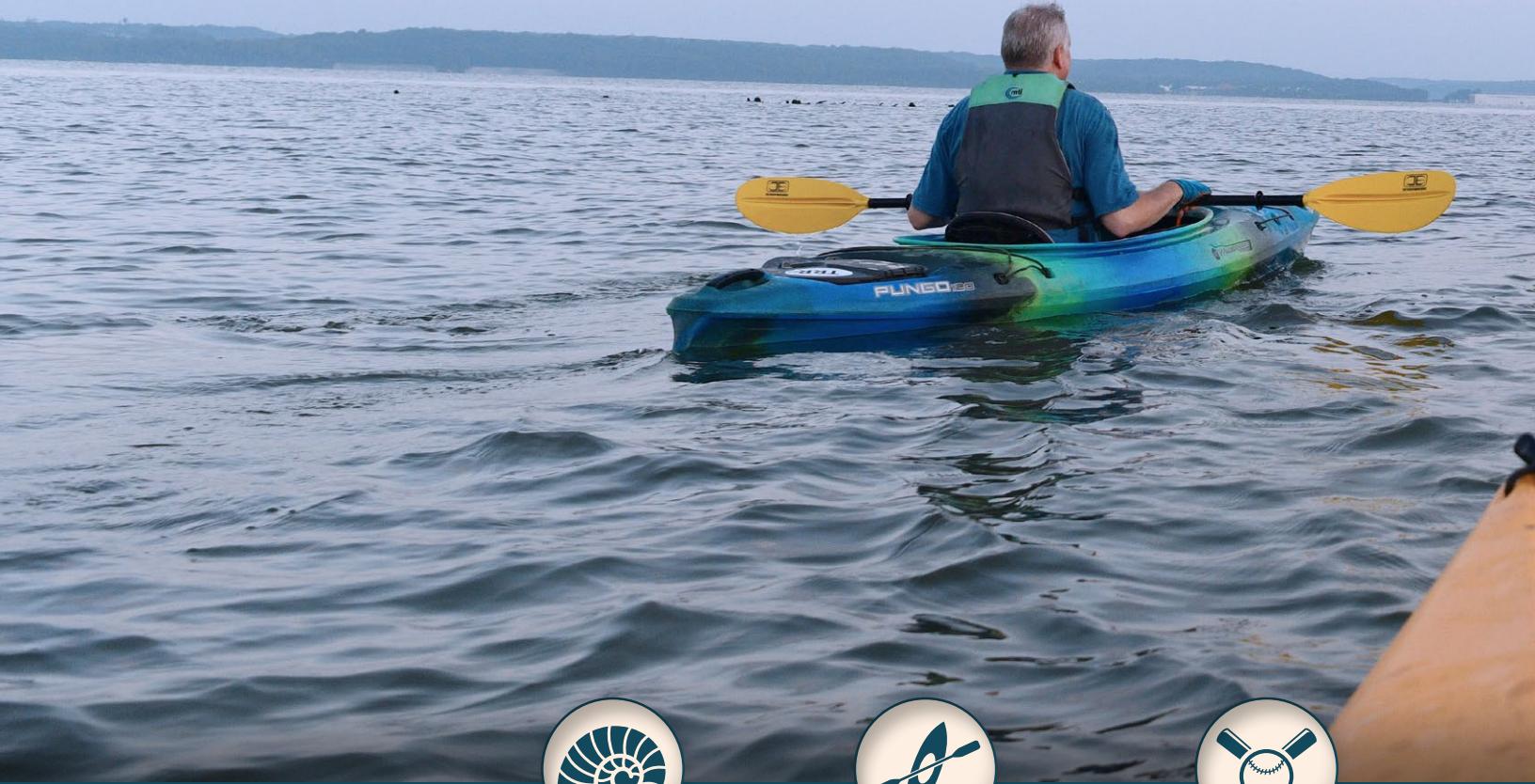


Mallows Bay  
Potomac River  
National Marine  
Sanctuary  
(Peter Turcik)

Waterfront  
Dining on the  
Potomac  
River  
(Staff Photographer)



# STAY and PLAY



## The Ultimate Charles County Bucket List

The southern shores of Maryland hold more than great seafood — they are also well-known spots for fossil hunting! Comb the beach at Purse State Park, and you're sure to leave with a pocket full of shark teeth.

### Fossil hunt at Purse State Park

### Kayak through the “Ghost Fleet” of Mallows Bay

Don't miss spending time exploring Mallows Bay (*read more on page 16*), our most popular tourist attraction. The opportunity to paddle through sunken warships is incredible enough on its own, but the serene waters and bald eagles soaring overhead make this truly an unforgettable experience.

### Catch a baseball game at Regency Furniture Stadium

Fun Fact: Regency Stadium was the first Atlantic League team to test the electronic umpire “TrackMan,” and the first to have a player steal first base. Join the “Crustacean Nation” in rooting for the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs and possibly catch a glimpse of new technology that may be adopted by MLB.

There are **52** weekends in a year.  
***Make Yours Legendary.***

When was the last time you embraced play? Here in Charles County, we offer countless opportunities for fun for all ages.

Share your adventures with **#ExploreCharlesCounty!**



#### **Touch history at the Dr. Samuel A. Mudd House Museum**

After shooting President Lincoln and fleeing Ford's Theatre, John Wilkes Booth sought medical help for his broken leg at the home of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd. On your gripping tour of this tale of murder and conspiracy, you'll grasp the same banister as Booth as you walk upstairs to see where Booth recovered.



#### **Reel in a bass from our rivers and lakes**

Anglers from near and far travel to Charles County for world-class bass fishing. Pick up some tackle and drop in a line at any of our waterfront parks. There's no better way to unwind than with a pole in hand!



#### **Traverse the length of the Indian Head Rail Trail**

What's a bucket list without a real challenge? Hit the 13 miles of this flat, paved path perfect for biking, rollerblading, or some serious strolling. The path takes you through a variety of scenic views, from forests to farmland to wetlands. You're sure to set sights on a deer, wild turkey, or bald eagle along the way — you might even see all three!



#### **Give a standing ovation at Port Tobacco Players**

You're in for a treat when you take in a show at Port Tobacco Players. From the moment you take your seat to when the final curtain closes, you'll feel the drama and excitement of this passionate theatrical community.

# family ATTRACTIOnS



There's fun for all ages at Regency Furniture Stadium in Waldorf, the home of the **Southern Maryland Blue Crabs**. While the best time to come is during a game, the stadium also hosts events throughout the year, such as Movies in the Outfield, Food Truck Festivals, Cornstalkers Trail of Terror, Pork in the Park, and the Blue Crabs Beer, Food, and Wine Festival. Kids will love Pinch's Playground, an exciting fenced-in area featuring play equipment and a rock-climbing wall.

SCAN HERE:



The weather won't impact your visit to **Capital Clubhouse** in Waldorf, a massive indoor sports facility open year around. Show off your ice skating moves on the NHL-sized rink and depending on availability, play a drop in game of volleyball or basketball.

Continue the competitive fun at **Scary Strokes**, a family entertainment center featuring a black-light mini golf course, arcade games, and Omni Arena, a unique four-person virtual reality experience. (Don't let the name fool you — the experience at Scary Strokes is appropriate for all ages.) Fuel up for all-day play at their Graveside Grill.

Located right off Route 301 in Newburg, **Southern Maryland Paintball** offers multiple ways to play paintball as well as Airsoft, a paint-free alternative that uses small plastic pellets. Choose from over a dozen games to play on one of their ten fields, including two Call of Duty-style maps and a turf field.

# ART and ANTIQUES

Stretch your legs and shop for unique treasures both indoors and out at **Glory Days Antiques** in Newburg. You'll find everything from funky lawn ornaments to vintage toys to Coca-Cola collectibles at this clean, well-organized antique emporium.

Be inspired at **Mattawoman Creek Art Center** in Smallwood State Park, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing visitors opportunities to engage with fine art. Walk the tranquil grounds dotted with sculptures, tour the rotating exhibits in the spacious gallery, and purchase locally made pieces in their gift shop. Sign up for one of their many creative classes, such as jewelry-making, watercolor painting, and fiber art.

Enjoy a performance at **Port Tobacco Players** in La Plata or the **Black Box Theatre** in Indian Head, where community members and visitors enjoy artistic expression in a supportive setting.

Attend an event hosted by the Charles County Arts Alliance in La Plata, an arts council that offers support and programming for all forms of art in the county.



Welcome Center 301-259-2500







# Sip and SAVOR

## Charles County's Food Roots

The waters of the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers have been a food source to Charles County residents for hundreds of years.

Watermen harvest succulent crabs and oysters and reel in rockfish and catfish. Head to a dockside restaurant where you can kick back with a cocktail and feel yourself unwind as you look out over the water and anticipate the boat-to-table bounty you're about to receive.

While crabs are a big part of our culture, generations of Charles County residents consider stuffed ham a holiday tradition. This classic Southern Maryland dish is believed to date back to the 17th-century and has both British and Afro-Caribbean origins. The ham is salted, deboned, and slit into several places before being stuffed with a mixture of cabbage, kale, onions, and seasonings. The ham is then wrapped, boiled or baked, sliced, and served cold. Purchase a salted ham at Hancock Family Farm or Bowling Green Farm to try this delicacy at home.

SCAN HERE:





# Dining Experiences Worth Driving For

## Savory

If leaving a restaurant hungry is your worst nightmare, make your dreams come true at [Lucianna's Steakhouse](#) in Waldorf. Eat an unlimited amount of Brazilian meats, sides, and anything from the salad bar. Flash the green card at your table to let servers know you're ready for more — they serve the flavorful skewered meats tableside — and turn the card to red when you've had your fill. Be sure to try the Picanha (Brazilian beef) seasoned with rock salt around the edges.

Forget what you think you know about Brussels sprouts — you've never had ones like these before. The Kung Pao Brussels Sprouts appetizer at [The Charles Farm Table & Public House](#) in La Plata is an explosion of flavor. The flash-fried sprouts are tossed in an Asian-style peanut sauce and topped with crushed peanuts and scallions. It's no wonder they're a fan favorite.

Sink your fork into the super lump crab cakes at [The Prime Street Grille](#) in White Plains, an award-winning steak and seafood restaurant that's perfect for date nights and celebrations.

Sit down for an authentic Persian meal of flavorful kabobs, rice with saffron, and the best tea of your life at [Silver Skewers](#), a family-owned restaurant beloved by the Waldorf community for over 25 years.

Get your hands on a doughboy (a local spin on a calzone) at [Bobby Rucci's Famous Deli & Doughboys](#) in White Plains. The restaurant's specialty, made with homemade dough stuffed with filling, sealed, and pan-fried, will have you planning your next visit before you finish your meal.

## Sweet



Stop by [Walls Bakery](#) in Waldorf, the oldest bakery in Charles County, for their "World Famous Walls chocolate eclairs." The legendary pastries are filled with custard pudding (made daily) and iced with chocolate.

When in Maryland, eat as Marylander's do! Embrace our state's popular seasoning with an Old Bay Caramel Ice Cream at [Landon's Ices & Creams](#) in La Plata. Get the full Landon's experience by ordering your sweet treat in one of their freshly-made waffle cones.

Go nuts for doughnuts at [B. Doughnut](#) in La Plata, where you'll find regular, vegan, and even savory doughnuts (dipped in everything bagel seasoning and stuffed with whipped cream cheese). Don't leave without trying a variety of their malasadas, Hawaiian-style Portuguese doughnuts tossed in sugar and filled with homemade pastry creams, whips, or jams.

Enjoy fabulous edible art at [Mix 'n Sweetz Bakury](#) in Waldorf, with unique cupcake flavors, and a custom cake to fit your style.

SIP & SAVOR



## Dock and Dine

Drop anchor and come ashore for a seafood meal of a lifetime. No boat? No problem. Landlubbers are welcome to join the feast. Sit down to a paper-covered table, roll up your sleeves, and grab a mallet — you're about to partake in a beloved Maryland tradition.

### Port Tobacco

[Port Tobacco Marina & Restaurant](#)

### Newburg

[Captain Billy's Crab House](#)

[Captain Charles Seafood House](#)

[Captain John's Crab House](#)

### Cobb Island

[The Rivah](#)

[Scuttlebutt Restaurant & Marina](#)

## Family-Owned Restaurants

**Here, you're family!** Nothing beats the warmth of Southern Maryland hospitality, and you're sure to receive it at one of our many family-owned restaurants.

### La Plata

**Marie's Diner:** Feel the energy at this popular all-day diner serving classic American comfort food.

**Ka'Ribbean Fire:** Home of Southern barbecue and Caribbean infused entrees.

**Texas Ribs & BBQ:** This relaxed roadhouse restaurant has been serving melt-in-your-mouth ribs for over thirty years. Save some room for their famous root beer float!

**Bollywood Masala:** Savor authentic Indian cuisine that rivals big city restaurants.

**Galazio Restaurant & Bar:** The owner of this Mediterranean eatery also owns Lucianna's Steakhouse in Waldorf and OBO Pizza in La Plata and Indian Head.

### Waldorf

**Dat Jerk Caribbean Chargrill:** Serving dishes inspired by family recipes, Dat Jerk is a welcoming place to try Caribbean flavors.

**Napoli's Pizzeria:** Greek and Italian specialties abound at this Mediterranean kid-friendly spot.

**Big Mama's Soul Food:** From chicken and waffles to gravy-smothered oxtails, you'll taste the love from this Southern and Caribbean inspired menu.

## WANT TO IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS?

Here's how you can tell the difference between a male crab ("jimmy") and a female crab ("sook"):

Turn them over and examine the apron — the flap on the white underside of the crab. Jimmies (*top illustration*) have an inverted T-shaped apron that resembles the Washington Monument. Sooks (*bottom illustration*) have a bell-shaped apron that resembles the dome of the U.S. Capitol.

**Did you know** that *Callinectes sapidus* (the Latin name for blue crabs) means beautiful swimmer?

# Coffee Shops and Craft Beverages

## Coffee

No trip is complete without a caffeine fix or pastry pick-me-up. Skip the chains and head to one of our independently-owned coffee shops. The friendly coffeehouse vibe at **Clarity Coffee House** in Indian Head makes a great backdrop for planning out your Charles County adventures or catching up on email.

You'll love the mission of **Wee Bean Coffee Roasters** in La Plata, which sources organic and sustainably grown coffee beans and sells locally made baked goods. Find more than freshly roasted coffee at **The Cove at Cobb Island** — they also offer food, wine, gelato, and chocolate.

## Craft Beverage

Sip on rum, rye whiskey, and other spirits at Maryland's first micro-distillery — **BlueDyer Distilling Co.** in Waldorf. Follow experienced distillers through their space and learn the fascinating science behind their craft liquor. Afterward, kick back with thoughtfully-made cocktails at their Scratch Bar, take in a concert, or test your smarts in trivia.

Grab a beer at **Patuxent Brewery Company** in Waldorf, the first fully minority-owned brewery in Maryland. You'll feel like a regular in this welcoming space where old friends and new faces mingle with ease. The owners of Patuxent are passionate about serving the community through their small-batch production and are consistently involved in exciting collaborations. Be sure to try their flagship beer, 301 Pale Ale (named after Route 301) and Sunken Sips IPA, deemed by locals to be the official beer of Charles County. Partial proceeds go to protecting local waterways, including Mallows Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Pick up wine from **Bridgett Vines** to enjoy during your visit — and be sure to take a few bottles home. The first licensed winery in Charles County, Bridgett Vines offers Chambourcin, Seyval Blanc, and Traminette varietals. Call ahead to place an order from their vineyard in Charlotte Hall or purchase wine from the La Plata Farmers Market, open Wednesdays and Saturdays from April-November.

Don't miss out on our newest cocktail location in La Plata — the **Bayou Girl Drink Factory** — our favorite Southern Maryland daiquiri shop.



# U-PICK FARMS and FARMERS MARKETS

SCAN HERE:



Enjoy a bounty of produce and provisions, and experience

## *Life on the farm*

### Pick Your Own

**Shlagel Farms** and **Middleton's Legacy Farm Lawnscape**s in Waldorf offer pick-your-own strawberries and pumpkins as well as fall festivals promising fun for the whole family. Shlagel Farms hosts a farmer's market on Saturdays from May thru October and offers pick-your-own blackberries. Legacy Farm offers Christmas Trees and wreath-making workshops in December.

### Farm to Fork

Be a part of the farm-to-table movement when you shop at **Hancock Family Farms** in La Plata, where you can find locally raised meats, farm-fresh eggs, seasonal veggies, and local flowers and crafts. Chat with their knowledgeable staff and be inspired by their commitment to humane practices and collaboration with nearby farms. What better souvenir to bring home than a pack of fresh steaks or homemade Old Bay pickles?

### Experience Farm Life

Opportunities to enjoy the property at **The Harvest House** at Serenity Farm in Benedict are plentiful. Take a tour and learn about the farm's rich history, interact with animals at the petting zoo, watch a sheep shearing demonstration, and even plant a vegetable or flower to take home. Come back in September for the farm's Sunflower Festival and drive home with an arm-full of blooms.

### Buy Local • Farmers Markets

Shop small and support our local economy at one of our Farmers Markets in Plata and Waldorf. Fill up your car with fresh produce, baked goods, local wines and spirits, soaps and crafts, and more. The Town of La Plata Farmers Market is open Wednesday and Saturday, April through November. The Waldorf Farmers Market is open on Saturdays, May through October.



# OUTDOOR RECREATION

## The gateway to SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Land of Natural and Historic Treasures



The possibilities for outdoor adventure here are endless, and we invite you to explore at your own pace. Drift through tranquil waters in the early morning light, pedal down a rail trail after lunch, and pitch a tent on a historic property. Discover acres of conservancy-protected land and miles of open spaces and shorelines along your way.

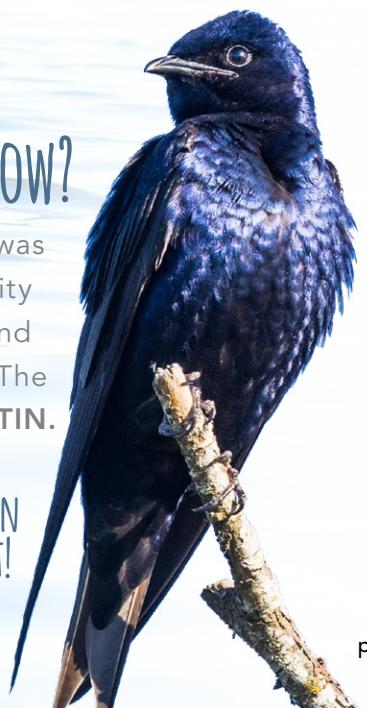
SCAN HERE:



### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2020 the town of La Plata was designated the first "Bird City Maryland" by the state's Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership. The town bird is the **PURPLE MARTIN**.

 SEE IF YOU CAN  
SPOT ONE DURING YOUR VISIT!





*Few places offer such  
a breathtaking blend of  
history and nature.*

# MALLOWS BAY

POTOMAC  
RIVER  
NATIONAL  
MARINE  
SANCTUARY





SCAN HERE:



**Follow the Potomac River** one hour south of D.C. and find yourself in Mallows Bay, a Piscataway heritage site and the first National Marine Sanctuary designated in Maryland. But don't be fooled by the serene atmosphere — there's plenty of captivating history and wildlife to discover both above and below the water.

### **Navigate through History**

The best way to experience Mallows Bay is by kayak, whether you bring your own or sign up for a tour with one of our knowledgeable local guides. Get goosebumps as you paddle with care through nearly 200 shipwrecks — the largest collection of shipwrecks in the Western Hemisphere! While some date back to the Revolutionary War, most of the sunken boats (known as the "Ghost Fleet") are World War I-era wooden steamships and were burned and abandoned after being deemed unnecessary for the war effort. Many of these vessels are still visible today, but it's worth peering through the waters to see what lurks beneath.

Though referred to as "ghosts," these shipwrecks now play an essential role in the ecosystem of the Chesapeake Bay. You'll be amazed to find a lush variety of trees and plants flourishing on top of the distinctive islands of rotted wood and steel, which are now home to birds, turtles, and other wildlife.



### **Birdwatching at Mallows Bay**

Think birds aren't your thing? There are few things more awe-inspiring than spotting bald eagles overhead or watching a great blue heron (*pictured*) glide gracefully over the water. Get the kids involved by making a game out of counting osprey nests among the shipwrecks! A visit to Mallows Bay is sure to convert you into a novice birder.

### **An Ever-Changing Landscape**

You've never seen anything like Mallows Bay before, and you'll never see it quite the same way again. The environment here is always changing — from the surroundings as the seasons turn to the condition of the ships to the new life growing around them. Luckily for you, this special place is always open for exploration.



## **18 Square Miles Of Haunting Beauty**

In 2017, The Ghost Fleet of the Potomac was deemed a National Treasure by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

# SMALLWOOD STATE PARK



*Imagine* pitching your tent and roasting marshmallows on a property that belonged to a governor of Maryland following the Revolutionary War. At Smallwood State Park, you can do just that and more! If you're looking for a place to unwind, look no further than the 628 wooded acres that make up this special refuge.



## Historic Significance

William Smallwood was Maryland's fourth governor; visitors to the park can walk the grounds of his restored 18th-century tidewater plantation and 19th-century tobacco barn. Seasonal tours are available between May and September.

## Camping Accommodations

Choose from 15 campsites with electric hookups or reserve one of the park's six rustic camper cabins with heat and air conditioning. Clean bathhouses nearby offer what every camper longs for after a day of outdoor adventure — a hot shower.

## Fun for the Young and Young at Heart

There's no shortage of activities here. Start your day with a peaceful hike through hardwood forests and tidal wetlands until you reach the picturesque bridge connecting the campground to Sweden Point Marina. You'll want to have a camera handy — this spot is perfect for a photo op! Head towards the docks to try your luck at bass fishing and grab a snack from the General Store or duck into the Discovery Center to admire the live animal displays and birdwatch from the observation deck. Children will love the playground at the top of the hill, which offers slides, swings, and a climbing wall.



## More Ways to Play

Take in the waterfront views from your shaded campsite at **Goose Bay Marina and Campground**. The campground offers themed weekends and family-friendly activities, as well as an onsite camp store with ice cream, non-perishable goods, and fishing and boat gear.

Practice your aim at the shooting, trap, and archery ranges at **Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area**. Once home to Piscataway Indians, the area boasts a variety of mature trees and an abundance of wildlife — white-tailed deer, squirrels, woodcock, rabbits, quail, waterfowl, mourning doves, wild turkeys, and other game species.

Show off your boat in the quaint town of **Cobb Island**, a popular day-trip destination for seafood lovers. Set anchor, learn about local watermen culture, and walk to one of five waterfront dining establishments.

Located on the banks of the Potomac River, golfers at **Swan Point Yacht & Country Club** might spot deer, heron, and bald eagles while on the course, which has a rating of 73.2. Water hazards can be found on 12 holes, providing competitive play among a beautiful backdrop. Golfers seeking a less challenging terrain will appreciate **White Plains Golf Course**, an affordable and well-maintained course managed by the County Parks Department. Both courses offer practice greens.





# A Park For Every Adventure

SCAN HERE:



## Birdwatching • Port Tobacco River Park

Make sure to pack your binoculars — you're bound to spot a variety of birds while walking the paths of Port Tobacco River Park. Head to the bald eagle nest viewing platform and keep your eyes peeled for Chandler and Hope, the park's resident bald eagle pair.

## Hiking Through History • Chapman State Park

Choose between a variety of trail lengths and difficulty levels at Chapman State Park. Don't miss Mount Aventine, a stunning pre-Civil War structure with an equally beautiful view of the Potomac River. Take a tour of the house before hitting one of the many trails accessed by heading down the hill towards the water. Tours are available on Sundays between April and October.

## Pedal Boats & Playgrounds • Gilbert Run Park

Tucked in the woods between La Plata and Charlotte Hall, Gilbert Run Park is an oasis for all ages. Rent a pedal boat around the expansive freshwater lake, let the kids run wild at the shaded playground, watch for wildlife along the nature trail, and gather for a meal around one of the provided grills. Don't forget to check out the new zip line feature next to the sand volleyball courts!

## Horseback Riding • Maxwell Hall Park

Saddle up for some four-legged fun along one of the six horse trails offered at Maxwell Hall Park. Depending on the trail, you might ride through open fields, wooded areas, or along the shores of the Patuxent River. Ready to test your skills? Try the Orange "judged trail course," which features 11 obstacles, or leap over eight cross-country-style jumps on the Yellow trail. You'll feel as though you've traveled back to colonial times as you canter through untouched land and take in the views of historic Maxwell Hall House, built in 1768.

Note: Maxwell Hall equestrian trails are only open to members. Memberships can be purchased year round on the parks website. Hikers and birders may use the trails free of charge.

## Fishing • Smallwood State Park

Drop a line at Sweden Point Marina along Mattawoman Creek, and you might catch largemouth bass, carp, catfish, or white or yellow perch. Fish from the shoreline, use the boat launch, or reserve one of the 50 slips at the marina. Visit the General Store at the marina to load up on ice, tackle, and snacks before your day on the water.



**FUN FACT:** The Potomac River is a well-known bass fishery. The park hosts annual Major League Fishing tournaments where anglers compete for a large cash prize.

# HERITAGE and History



**One of Maryland's First Settlements** — This historic merchant village on the banks of the Port Tobacco River invites visitors to visualize the bustling streets of a populous port town — the second-largest in colonial Maryland in the mid-1700s! This land belonged to the Potapoco and Piscataway tribes before the town's establishment in 1727. Historic Port Tobacco now consists of three carefully maintained structures offering a unique look into the life of Charles County residents at the height of the tobacco industry.

Ongoing archeological research provides insight into this special village, which was home to over 80 buildings, including a courthouse, church, merchant stores, a newspaper, jeweler, shoemaker, weaver, milliner, postmaster, carriage maker, and even a brewery.



# TAKE A TOUR

## Port Tobacco Courthouse

The courthouse, a reconstruction of the original 1819 structure, now serves as a museum offering insight into the tobacco industry, the impact of the Civil War on this area, and local archeological finds. The courthouse is also a National Park Service National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom site. Two African Americans were tried here in 1845 for aiding over 30 armed freedom seekers.

SCAN HERE:



## Washington Burch House

Washington Burch, an emancipated slave, purchased his 18th-century home here following the Civil War. Burch established a school for African American children and served as a state delegate to the District of Republicans Convention. He was also the local jailer. His home (*pictured below, left*) is one of the last Colonial-era houses remaining in the area.

**Port Tobacco Village** Port Tobacco Village is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. seasonally. Use the QR code to find current operating hours. Be sure to stop by the Port Tobacco One Room School House just around the corner.

## Stagg Hall

A tour of Stagg Hall (*pictured below*) is a must-do! Let yourself be swept away by the enthusiasm and expansive knowledge of your guide, who will explain the significance of the building while letting you examine historical artifacts. You'll love stepping into the merchant store, a recreation of the colonial business once belonging to Stagg Hall owners and business partners Barnes and Ridgate. Each item in the room is listed in the original store catalog (visible on Mr. Ridgate's desk), and visitors of all ages are welcome to touch and interact with the goods.



**FUN FACTS:** Stagg Hall is considered one of the best-preserved examples of domestic architecture in Southern Maryland. The hearth and chimney are believed to be the oldest constructed structure in the entire village. The Art Institute of Chicago purchased a whole room from Stagg Hall in the 1930s; forty years later, the homeowners repurchased the room and had it carefully reinstalled.

# THOMAS STONE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



## Hike through a National Park

Tour the home of a signer of the Declaration of Independence

### Explore a 19th-Century Tobacco Barn

Thomas Stone, a wealthy man with impressive family connections, built his stately home here despite working in Annapolis. It's not hard to imagine why the estate, named Haberdeventure, was considered one of the finest in Charles County.

Here you can get a peek at exhibits in several rooms in this uniquely designed home consisting of five connected structures set in an arc. Picture Stone rushing to get his sick wife home after signing the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia or sitting at his desk writing a letter to his friend George Washington, who lived across the river.

If you're walking to the historic house from the Visitor Center, stop to pay respects at the Stone family cemetery. For a complete park experience, take a stroll on the 1.5-mile outbuildings trail — check out the horse barn, tobacco barn, corn crib, and tenant house along the way.

Don't miss the chance to speak to one of the passionate NPS Rangers at the Visitor's Center — their knowledge will add tremendous depth to your visit. Take in



an engaging film about Thomas Stone, browse the exhibits and bookstore, and donate to the park if you're so inclined. Restrooms are also available, and both the Visitor Center and historic house are wheelchair accessible.

The park is open Thursdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in March to December. The park is closed in January and February. Admission is free.

Continue your learning of the family with a visit to nearby Rich Hill, the childhood home of Margaret Brown (Thomas Stone's wife) and her brother Gustavus. Dr. Gustavus Brown went on to be one of George Washington's physicians and cared for the President on his deathbed. Rich Hill is in the process of being restored.

*Haberdeventure* is a loose variation of the Latin phrase "havitatio de ventus," which means to "dwell in or of the wind." Stand in front of the house during your visit and see if you feel a breeze touch your face!

The Thomas Stone National Historic Site is one of many Charles County destinations featured on the **Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail and Byway**.



# TRAILS AND BYWAYS



## Travel through history

### National Religious Freedom Scenic Byway

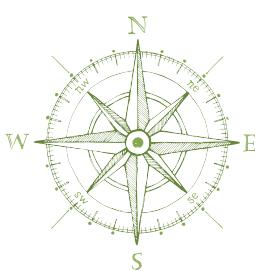
Southern Maryland is known as the birthplace of American religious liberty. **St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Chapel Point** is a must-visit for anyone interested in learning more about our role in securing this fundamental human right.

The church is the oldest continuously active Roman Catholic parish in the original 13 colonies; the attached manor house is the oldest Jesuit residence in the world still in use. Admire the stained glass windows and beautiful architectural details before stepping outside to enjoy what's considered one of the best views in the county. As you take in the serene surroundings, consider how legislation created hundreds of years ago in Maryland served as the foundation for the religious freedom we experience today.

### Maryland Civil War Trail: John Wilkes Booth

Imagine you're a doctor and someone comes to you for help. At some point, you learn your patient is on the run after shooting the president, and you become convicted as a co-conspirator in the crime. This scenario was a reality for Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, whose well-preserved home is a must-stop along the John Wilkes Booth Trail.

Tours of the **Dr. Samuel A. Mudd House** are available on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Learn details about Lincoln's assassination you never heard in history class and continue to follow Booth's footsteps through Charles County, including stops in Port Tobacco and Bel Alton.



WANT TO TAKE THE TOUR  
FROM START TO FINISH?

You'll begin in D.C., work your way through Southern Maryland, and end in Port Royal, VA, where Booth was shot and killed after refusing to turn himself in to the authorities.



# Honoring Our First Peoples

Charles County was first inhabited by Algonquin-speaking Indigenous Peoples, including the state-recognized **Piscataway Conoy Tribe** and Piscataway Indian Nation.

As you explore, consider how all of the land and waters you see on your visit are part of the Piscataway identity and are significant because of the people who first lived and harvested resources here. While Europeans recorded accounts of the local Indigenous Peoples in the 17th century, their history spans 12,000 years. Many descendants of the tribes remain in Charles County today and view several areas as sacred to their heritage, such as Mallows Bay and Chapel Point State Park.

Learn more about the re-emerging history of the Piscataway at the Crain Memorial Welcome Center.

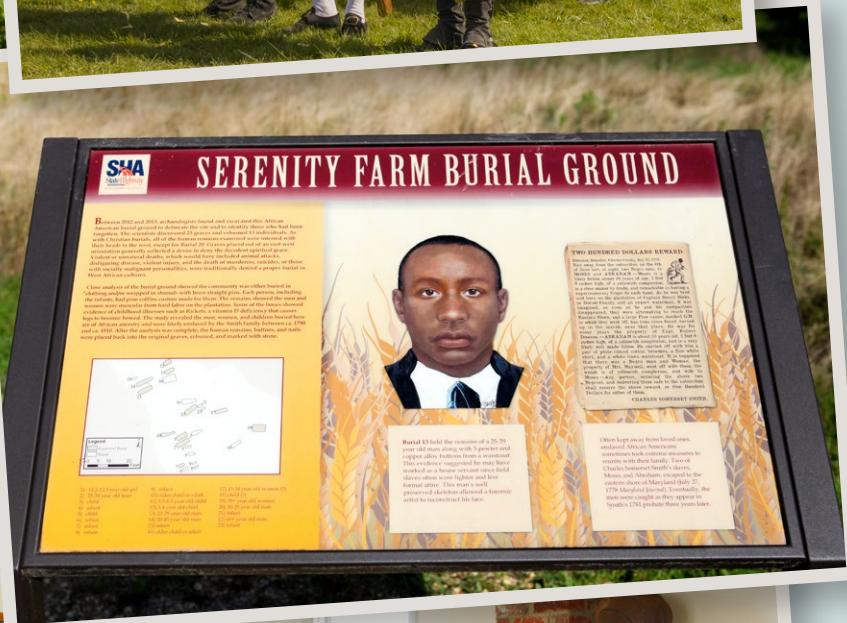




## Maryland Veterans Museum at Patriot Park

You'll be amazed by the impressive span of history on display at this museum in Newburg, which seeks to honor Marylanders of all branches of service from the Revolutionary War to the War in Afghanistan. Exhibits recognize Maryland's male and female service members, including Native Americans and Black Americans. Take in military artifacts, models of battles, service uniforms, and more. Whether the museum is a stop on your way to a crab feast or the destination of your visit, it is well worth your time.

The museum is open on Saturdays and Sundays.



## African American Burial Ground at Serenity Farm

In 2012, a storm took out a large oak tree on Serenity Farm and uncovered evidence of a burial ground. Archeological research revealed 23 graves of enslaved men, women, and children dating from 1790-1810.

Visitors must make an appointment with the farm to explore the area or request a tour. Hear the fascinating story behind the burial ground's discovery, learn about the people buried here, and recite the names of enslaved peoples from the area to honor the dead.

## McConchie Schoolhouse

The Historic McConchie One-Room School exclusively served African Americans in Charles County and is now a living history museum offering a unique look into student life during racial segregation and the Jim Crow era. The Charles County Fair Board bought the school in 1992 and moved it from its original location on Route 6 to the fairgrounds in La Plata.

The school is open to the public for special programs. Private tours are available by request.

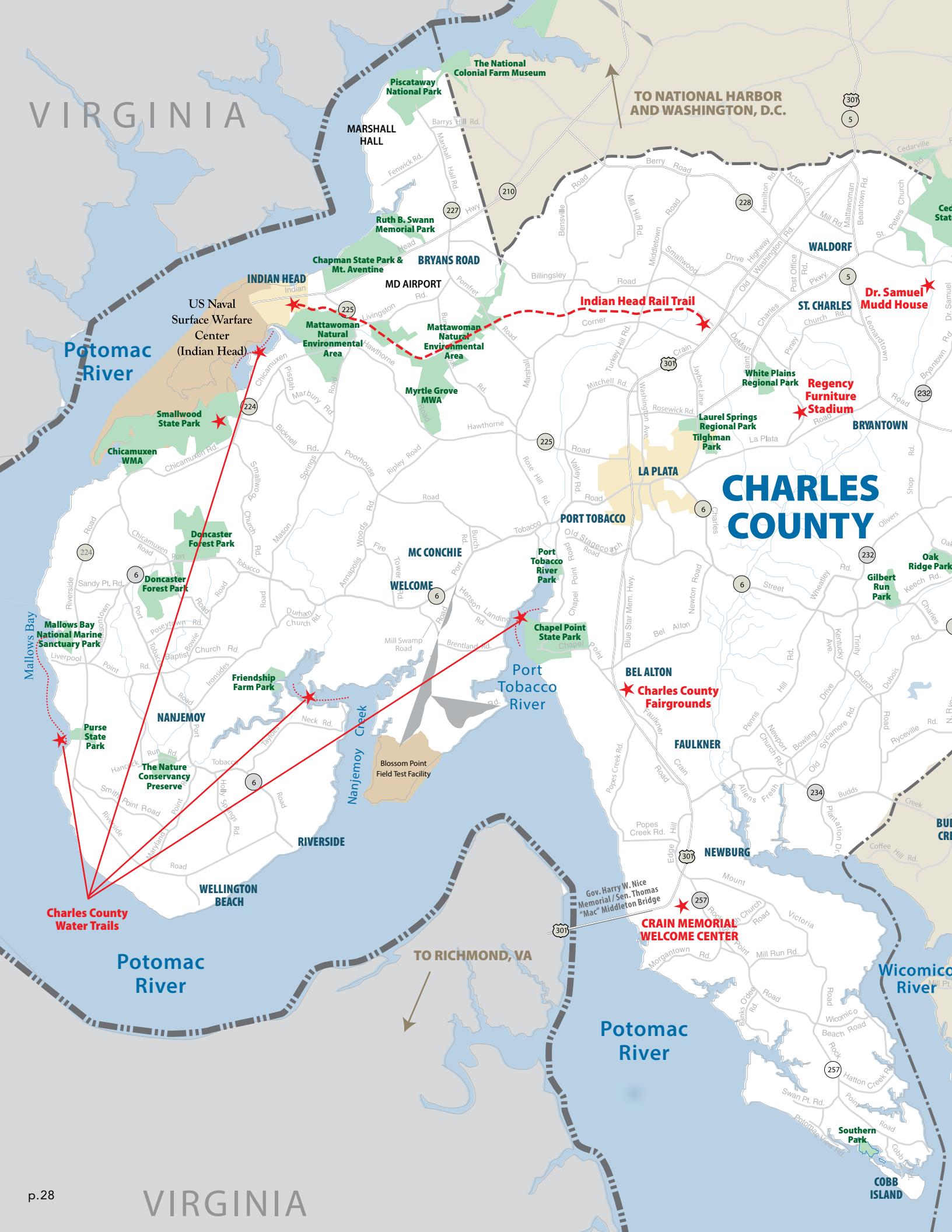
## African American Heritage Society's Heritage House

Staffed by volunteers from the African American Heritage Society, the Heritage House in La Plata contains historical artifacts and memorabilia and seeks to inform visitors about the African American experience in Charles County.

The Heritage House is open by appointment.

For more African American history, be sure to pick up the Southern Maryland African American Heritage Guide at the Crain Memorial Welcome Center in Newburg or view it online at [ExploreCharlesCounty.com](http://ExploreCharlesCounty.com).





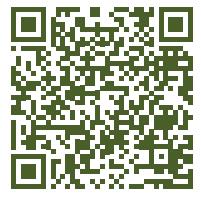




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