

RESOLUTION 2016-08

A resolution of the Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Perryville, Maryland, to request the transfer of Garrett Island from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the National Park Service as a component of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail for the purpose of ensuring public access to this island and advancing regional economic development through partnership and heritage tourism.

WHEREAS, the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway, Inc. (LSHG) has been designated as the local management entity for the development of land and water based trails in the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway since the year 2000 therefore is proposing the island transfer in accordance with locally and legislatively adopted plans; and

WHEREAS, the LSHG in partnership with our government, the Chesapeake Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, the Maryland Scenic Byway Program and the National Park Service have developed a series of comprehensive management plans for land and water trail development of state and national historic trails and byways in our jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, Garrett Island formerly known as Palmer's and later Watson Island is 200 acres with the highest elevation being 80ft is situated at the mouth of the Susquehanna River which is one of the oldest rivers on earth and the longest non-navigable river in North America with drainage into and the Atlantic Ocean; and

WHEREAS, Garrett Island is the only rocky island in the tidal waters of the Chesapeake and in 1622 was awarded to Edward Palmer as part of a land grant by King James I of England; in 1637 was established by William Claiborne as a trading post and the 1643 the Proprietary Government of Maryland ordered its fortification and on it build Fort Conquest: and

WHEREAS, Garrett Island was the first settlement in Cecil County and once home to John C. Paca grandson of William B. Paca, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a Maryland Governor; and

WHEREAS, 16 U.S.C. Section 668dd Public Law 108-131 authorized the U.S Department of the Interior to purchase Garrett Island as a part of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge to be managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which they did in 2004; and

WHEREAS, public access for boaters, paddlers, fishermen, campers, and explorers has been extremely limited to Garrett island since it was transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and

WHEREAS, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (Trail) was established by Congress in 2006 to commemorate John Smith's historic 3,000-mile voyages of discovery on land and water around the Chesapeake; to help promote the conservation, public enjoyment, and

appreciation of the Chesapeake watershed's rich natural and cultural history; and to provide for recreational opportunities along the Trail; *and*

WHEREAS, Garrett Island is a crucial component of the history of Captain Smith's exploration of the Chesapeake Bay, and historians believe it was the site where in 1608, Captain John Smith first encountered and traded with the Susquehannock Indians; *and*

WHEREAS, with its strategic location in Cecil and Harford Counties in Maryland between the waterfront communities of Perryville, Havre de Grace and Port Deposit ; its association with John Smith, the Susquehannock Indians and other important events in our national, state and local history; and its outstanding sheltered waters, beach landings, and other recreational features, we believe Garrett Island can provide tremendous recreational, tourism, educational and cultural benefits to the region; *and*

WHEREAS, 16 U.S.C. Section 1244(a)(25)(C) specifically states that the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Trail is to be administered by the National Park Service; *and*

WHEREAS, we request that Garrett Island be transferred from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the National Park Service to be managed and interpreted as part of the Trail, with appropriate public access and stewardship of the Island and its resources; *and*

WHEREAS, we also request that the Trail be designated as a Unit of the National Park System and that the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trail Program be reauthorized as a program of the Trail.

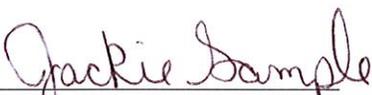
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Perryville hereby urges the United States Congress and the Department of the Interior to take such actions as are necessary to transfer Garrett and Battery Islands to the National Park Service, designate and administer the Trail as a "unit" of the National Park System, and reauthorize the Chesapeake Gateways program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor of Perryville is hereby requested to endorse this resolution, thereby indicating approval thereof.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be sent to the Maryland General Assembly and Governor of the State of Maryland, whereby requesting their endorsement.

WITNESS the signature of the undersigned as of this 7th day of June, 2016

ATTEST:


Jackie Sample, Town Clerk

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
OF THE TOWN OF PERRYVILLE


James L. Eberhardt, Mayor