



Watermen's Heritage Tourism Training Program

Watermen Developing Economic Opportunities in
Coastal Virginia

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What is the Program?

- Trains watermen throughout coastal Virginia to lead Watermen Heritage Tours and develops community partnerships
- Builds on Maryland effort developed by the Chesapeake Conservancy so there is now a coordinated Bay-wide program
- Intensive training program includes a comprehensive curriculum that covers business development, marketing, insurance, liability, ecosystem science, history, and more.
- Throughout the training classes, participants are connected with local and regional resources
- Required capstone projects that detail their business and tour specifics



Why We Created This Program

- Provide new economic opportunities for Virginia watermen using existing equipment and knowledge within Tourism Sector
- Re-establish watermen as leaders in community development
 - Developing tourism based businesses that draw visitors into coastal Virginia towns
 - Watermen form partnerships with other local businesses (e.g. transportation services, B&B and hoteliers, marinas, restaurants)
 - Provide recommendations on other activities after tours
- Develop watermen as “Ambassadors” for their local communities and rivers
 - Outreach on watermen heritage, local history, culture, environmental resources, seafood, and other community businesses
 - Providing opportunities for visitors to spend a day on the Bay
 - Personalize the commercial fishing industry and make the connections between seafood and healthy Chesapeake Bay
 - Ties into other coastal initiatives like Blueways, wine and oyster trails, historical tours, artisan trail, John Smith Water Trail and Gateways programs, festivals and community events

Training Classes

- Two classes were held in 2013
 - Lower Northern Neck, February
 - Middle Peninsula, November
 - 20 watermen/women were trained
 - Captain's licensing/certifications were offered to participants in Middle Peninsula class
- Another two are proposed for 2014
 - Upper Northern Neck
 - Lower Hampton Roads
- Ecotourism Certification Training Classes
 - Open to anyone, not exclusive to watermen
 - 8-week intensive course held at RCC and ESCC beginning March 13th (6-9 pm)- registration through the colleges
 - Program participants will receive certification, including logo usage
 - Supported through Virginia's Coastal Program and builds on earlier courses



Community Connections

- Tourism is huge business in Virginia, generating \$21.2 Billion in 2012
- New tourism opportunities help entire community and act to stimulate economic development
- This program increases tourism in Virginia, especially within rural coastal communities
- Provide watermen with another means to make a living while supplementing their fishing income, thereby preserving their heritage
- Ties into other initiatives like Blueways, wine and oyster trails, historical tours, artisan trail, John Smith Water Trail and Gateways programs, festivals and community events



Next Steps

- Additional training classes
- Marketing
- Strengthening overall program and establishing a coordinator
- Building the network of participants and partnerships
- Distribute program video



Thank You & Our Project Partners



Virginia Community College
System's Institutes of Excellence

Northern Neck Tourism
Commission



Virginia Waterman's Association



The
WETLANDS PROJECT
Motivation for Conservation

To View and Book Tours, Visit:
www.WatermenTours.com

Community Based Tourism

