

WIDEWATER STATE PARK

MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AUGUST 2008



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MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Widewater State Park is located in Stafford County on the peninsula created by the confluence of Aquia Creek and the Potomac River. The park consists of approximately 1,100 acres with water frontage on both the river and the creek. The Commonwealth acquired the land from Dominion Resources in 2006. Dominion originally planned on using the site for an electrical generation facility.

The master plan for Widewater State Park was developed in accordance with the master planning process set forth in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. An advisory committee comprised of Stafford County residents, adjacent landowners, government officials, user groups, and local businesses crafted the plan with the guidance of the public. As part of the development of the park master plan, goals and objectives and a park purpose statement were developed.

The purpose of Widewater State Park is to provide premiere water and land based educational and outdoor recreational opportunities while protecting and interpreting the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources of the peninsula of land cradled between Aquia Creek and the Potomac River in Stafford County.

Goals were established for providing a wide range of day-use recreational activities, educational and interpretive programs as well as facilities including camping and cabins. Management and maintenance by a well-equipped and trained staff is also included as a priority park goal.

Widewater State Park is accessed via State Routes 611, 633, and 658, Brent's Point Road. Brent's Point Road runs down the center of the peninsula dividing the park. The lands that comprise the park are divided into five separate parcels. These parcels have a considerable amount of private lands lying between them. Much of the private land is subdivided for residential purposes, although many of the lots do not have homes on them. A grid system of residential streets provides access to the residential areas. One private corridor passes through management area V and provides access to private lands on the southwestern edge of the park.

A system of unpaved forest management roads provides access to most of the park. With improvements and connectors, portions of this road system can become an extensive multi-use trail system. Some other portions of these roads will be upgraded to function as the interior park road system. These roads will also provide access to the day-use areas, overnight areas and environmental education center.

The soils on the Widewater peninsula are marginal for most construction activities include areas with a high water table. Public water and sewer facilities are not available.

The river's bank along the Potomac River is fairly high and steep making bank erosion an issue wherever facility development is proposed. There are suitable places for bank fishing and wade fishing. Fishing piers are proposed where deeper water can be accessed. Hand-carry boat launches for canoes, kayaks, and small boats are planned on the Potomac River and on Aquia Creek. A dual ramp for boat launching is planned on Aquia Creek just before it flows into the Potomac. Two small ponds are also included in the park.

The park land is suitable for day-use and overnight facilities. A visitor center interprets the natural and historic resources of the park. One major interpretive theme will explore the glory days of fishing on the Potomac at a re-enacted fish camp. A second historic theme will explore Langley's early experiments with aircraft launched from boats. The diverse habitats, marshes, forest types, and waterfront allow great opportunities for environmental education and nature study. A residential environmental education center is proposed to serve as an environmental educational programming focal point for regional school systems, conservation organizations, and adult and youth outdoor education programs. Other day use activities offered will include non-motorized trails, picnicking, playgrounds, and open field play areas.

Overnight use areas will include a campground, group camp, cabin area, and a small canoe-in camping area. The residential component of the environmental education center will also provide overnight facilities.

Landowners who live on Widewater peninsula are very concerned about the impact that park traffic will have on the capacity of the access roads to safely carry both local and park traffic. They have recommended that development of the park be tied to necessary upgrades of state routes 633 and 658.

Stafford County is one of the fastest growing counties in Virginia. As the Washington, DC metropolitan area expands southward, the population of Stafford County has grown. Development of Widewater State Park will help meet the need for open space areas for this growing population to enjoy traditional family-oriented outdoor recreation activities. The long frontage on the Potomac River and Aquia Creek and the many miles of trails planned for the park will help meet the demand for activities that have the highest participation rates in the state. Overnight facilities will attract visitors from throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

The three-phase development plan for Widewater State Park begins with basic infrastructure: roads, trails, utilities, maintenance and administrative facilities, and day-use recreation areas. In later phases educational facilities and overnight accommodations are to be constructed. The following list identifies, by management area, the facilities which are included in each development phase.

WIDEWATER PHASED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Management Areas

- Area I = Northeast parcel
- Area II = Middle eastern parcel
- Area III = Brent Point parcel
- Area IV = Southwestern parcel
- Area V = Large western parcel

The phased development plan is keyed to five development areas, and it identifies each facility to be developed in each area for that particular phase. The development plan follows:

Phase I –

Road improvements based on VDOT recommendations.

- Ranger residences (2)

Area I

- Entrance road – possible conservation easement along north side of Brent Point Road from railroad crossing to sharp right turn.
- Utilities and infrastructure
- New park entrance road and contact station/camp store
- Park office/ visitor center
- Hand carry boat launch
- Fishing pier
- Trails and trailhead parking may also include blinds and boardwalk Brent Marsh

Area IV

- Vegetative screening on western boundary–

Area V

- Maintenance area I
- Trails and trailhead parking
- Wildlife viewing areas and facilities

Total Phase I Cost \$15,597,036

Phase II

- Road improvements.
- Main trunk line trail for movement within park without a car

Area I

- Interpretive displays
- Fish camp, Langley story

Area II

- Upgrade driveway
- Hand carry launch
- Canoe in campsites with vault toilet for blueway
- Trails and trailhead parking

Area III

- Extend the road
- Fishing pier
- Picnic area with shelters
- Shoreline stabilization
- Restroom

Area IV

- Road and utilities
- Boat launch and parking
- Picnic area, playground
- Restroom
- Bank fishing

Total Phase II Cost \$12,528,594

Phase III

Area II

- Entrance Road
- Environmental education center and utilities
- Trails
- Canoe launch

Area III

- Ranger residence
- Maintenance area 2

Area V

- Roads/utilities
- Campground
- Cabins
- Group camp

Total Phase III Cost \$25,236,900

Total Park Cost \$53,362,530

Staffing and Operational Costs

Staffing and operational costs for the new Widewater State Park are based on fiscal year 2009 budget projections. Each development phase has specific staffing needs and operational costs. In addition, each phase will have one-time expenses for vehicles, tractors, mowers, weed eaters, communications equipment, and other equipment associated with new staff and facility operations. The total costs for Phase 1 development including salaries for five (5) permanent staff, OTPS expenses, and one time costs is \$681,000. At complete build out, to be able to achieve full operation, an additional \$543,000 in operating funds will be needed which includes salaries for four (4) additional staff. The total one time costs for all 3 phases are projected to be \$381,000. Without the projected staffing, operating and one time costs for the 3 development phases, there will be insufficient funds or staff to adequately operate the park at full build

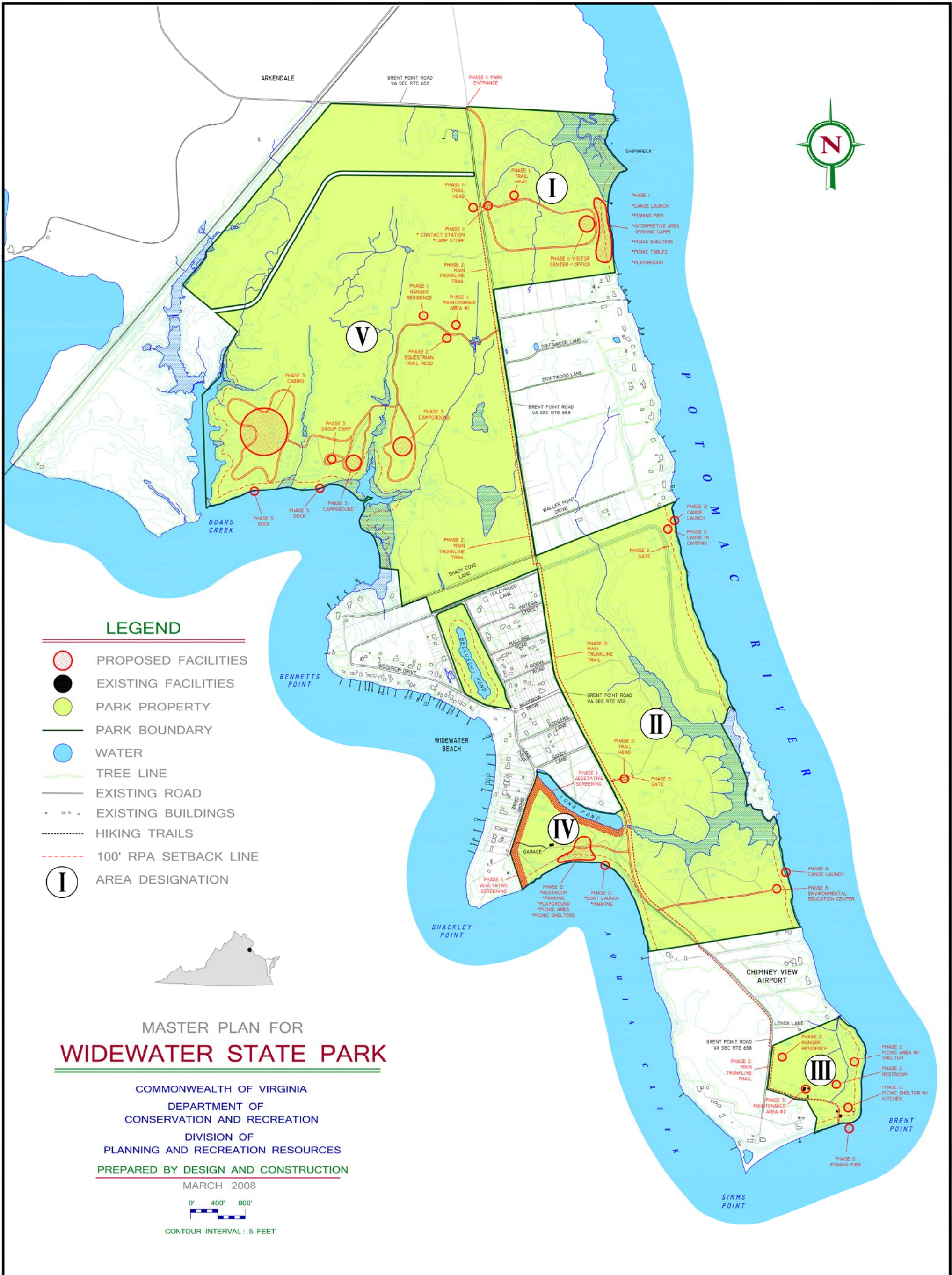
out. The total cost to operate the Widewater State Park at full build out is projected to be \$1,323,000.

Widewater State Park Phased Development Costs

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	FULL BUILD OUT
STAFFING	STAFFING	STAFFING	STAFFING
Park Manager			Park Manager
		Asst. Park Manager	Asst. Park Manager
Chief Ranger			Chief Ranger
	Education Specialist		Education Specialist
Park Ranger (2)	Park Ranger (2)		Park Ranger (4)
Prog. Support Tech.			Prog. Support Tech.
SALARY TOTAL	SALARY TOTAL	SALARY TOTAL	SALARY TOTAL
\$241,000	\$132,000	\$60,000	\$433,000
WAGE TOTAL	WAGE TOTAL	WAGE TOTAL	WAGE TOTAL
\$65,000	\$43,000	\$131,000	\$239,000
OTPS TOTAL	OTPS TOTAL	OTPS TOTAL	OTPS TOTAL
\$93,000	\$43,000	\$134,000	\$270,000
ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS	ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS	ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS	ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS
\$399,000	\$218,000	\$325,000	\$942,000
ONE TIME COSTS*	ONE TIME COSTS*	ONE TIME COSTS*	ONE TIME COSTS*
\$282,000	\$38,000	\$61,000	\$381,000
TOTAL COSTS	TOTAL COSTS	TOTAL COSTS	TOTAL COSTS
\$681,000	\$256,000	\$386,000	\$1,323,000

NOTE – All costs (salary, wage, OTPS (Other than Personnel Services), One time costs are based on FY09 budget projections.

* One-time operational expenses for vehicles, tractors, mowers, weed eaters, communications equipment, and other equipment associated with new staff and facility operations.



LEGEND

- PROPOSED FACILITIES
- EXISTING FACILITIES
- PARK PROPERTY
- PARK BOUNDARY
- WATER
- TREE LINE
- EXISTING ROAD
- EXISTING BUILDINGS
- HIKING TRAILS
- 100' RPA SETBACK LINE
- AREA DESIGNATION



**MASTER PLAN FOR
WIDEWATER STATE PARK**

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
 DEPARTMENT OF
 CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
 DIVISION OF
 PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES
 PREPARED BY DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
 MARCH 2008

