



York River State Park
5526 Riverview Road
Williamsburg, VA 23188-6732

YORK RIVER STATE PARK MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2011 UPDATE



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Planning and Recreation Resources
203 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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Reviewed by the Board of Conservation and Recreation on December 15, 2011.

Approved:

_____/S/_____
David A. Johnson, Director
Department of Conservation
and Recreation

December 20, 2011
Date



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This York River State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is an update to the official unabridged master plan document adopted in 2006 by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). It is the most recent five-year review as described in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. This master plan update is intended to set forth a clear vision for the future (based on phased development), while fulfilling the narrative text requirements of Chapter IV of the Virginia Capital Outlay Manual and §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. It outlines the desired future condition for York River State Park when it is fully developed.

York River State Park is sited in the Hampton Roads Planning District in James City County, located not far from the heavily populated Cities of Williamsburg, Newport News, Poquoson, Hampton, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach, as well as York County.

Located on the banks of the York River, the park consists of 2,536 acres and has 3.5 miles of river frontage. Located within the park boundaries is the Taskinas Plantation Archaeological District which encompasses the historic 18th Century Taskinas Plantation, and is proposed for state and federal historic register designation. The park also contains significant Native American archaeological sites, one of which, the Croaker Landing Site, is on the National Register of Historic Places. There are also two known 10,000-year old Paleo-Indian activity areas within the park's boundaries that may also eligible for National Register listing.

Included within the park is the Taskinas Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve that supports research and monitoring in a unique watershed containing upland marle forest, fresh water habitats, estuarine habitats, and meso-haline tidal habitats. The Taskinas Creek Estuarine Research Reserve is managed in cooperation with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) for research and educational purposes. VIMS scientists have established permanent monitoring stations within the reserve so that they can monitor changes in the Taskinas Creek watershed environment. While there are some trails within the Reserve, most other development would be inappropriate, and the master plan calls only for the construction of wildlife observation platforms at key viewing locations.

This 2011 update places value on connecting York River State Park to other resources in the community. The York River provides many opportunities to connect with other resources, including the York River Water Trail, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Historic Trail, as well as park facilities on both sides of the river. Many historic sites are located nearby the park, including Williamsburg, Jamestown, the Colonial National Scenic Parkway, and Colonial National Historic Park. A connection to Bike Route 76 should be explored. The Park is listed as a site on the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Birding and Wildlife Trail. The York River State Park Regional Connectivity Map is an attachment to the full Master Plan document.

The park was purchased in 1969 and construction began in 1975. York River State Park received Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) in 1973, 1976, 1978 and 2003 to acquire land and construct facilities in the park. In compliance with the LWCF Act of 1965 and amendments thereto, the Commonwealth of Virginia is required to maintain this park for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

As a part of the 2011 master plan process, the 2005 park master plan was reviewed. It was determined that no significant changes occurred to warrant a full revision of the master plan. The goals and objectives and the desired future condition of the park have not changed since adoption of the 2005 plan. The phased development plan and costs have been revised to reflect projects that have been completed since 2005, and the park staffing and operations costs data have been also updated to reflect current conditions. The adopted park purpose statement is stated below:

“The purpose of York River State Park, a Chesapeake Bay Gateway site, is to provide premiere outdoor recreational, research, and educational opportunities while protecting and interpreting, in perpetuity, the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources of the lower peninsula of Virginia”

Attendance at York River State Park has remained fairly stable over the last six years.

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
74,754	78,705	56,386	76,547	161,658	134,541	180,400	158,842	166,982	147,650

In 2010 York River had 147,650 visitors to the park; all were day-use visitors. With this level of visitation, it is estimated that the park had an economic impact on the local economy of approximately \$2,362,400. Master Plan recommendations designed to increase visitors and improve the visitor experience, once implemented, should have a further positive impact on the community’s economic vitality.

To date the park has been managed primarily as a day-use park. The visitor center offers programming and interpretive displays. A comprehensive trail system is designed to meet the needs of a variety of user groups. There are single-track mountain bike trails, equestrian trails, hiking trails, and multi-use trails. The day-use area contains a picnic area with shelters, tables, and grills, outdoor play areas, and parking. Canoeing and kayaking in Taskinas Creek and boating in the York River are very popular activities. The boat launch at Croaker Landing is heavily used. A fishing pier is also located at Croaker Landing.

This 2011 master plan update represents both new facilities and improvements to existing facilities. New facilities at this park should be designed and built with consideration to the original design and layout of facilities. To the greatest extent possible, Virginia State Parks strives to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards. All future phases of park construction will be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner. Building and site design will implement green energy standards using energy-efficient, sustainable

materials and processes to the greatest extent possible. These facilities will be carefully sited to minimize impacts to the views of the park from the adjacent lands and water bodies. Development activities will comply with the requirements set forth by the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Best Management Practices (BMP) Handbook for Erosion and Sediment Control in order to protect water quality.

Additional land acquisition is recommended to enhance park offerings, buffer the park from inappropriate development or protect valued viewsheds. Future land acquisitions will only be negotiated with willing property owners. The placement of conservation easements on adjacent property to preserve the natural resources, cultural landscapes, and scenic resources in close proximity to the park will be encouraged. In working cooperatively with neighboring landowners, the park will be enhanced and protected over time.

The proposed developments for York River State Park are presented in priority order. Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan) and covers a 20-year timeframe.

PHASE I

- Improve boat ramp facilities and bulkheads at Croaker Landing
- Implement road improvements on Croaker Road (VDOT Road)
- Renovate/upgrade visitor center including interpretive area and displays
- Construct a new park office and welcome center
- Build new contact station at park entrance
- Stabilize shoreline at critical locations
- Connect to county water
- Place utilities underground
- Resurface roads and parking areas
- Improve ADA access to park facilities

The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$12,804,480

PHASE II

- Construct campsites (4) for Blueway with SST
- Construct an overnight educational facility
- Construct staff residence
- Construct equestrian parking lot and access road
- Resurface roads and parking areas
- Expand park trails including bike lanes on roadways and improve external trail connections
- Enhance dock area at Taskinas Creek for transient canoes/kayaks

The total estimated cost for Phase II development is \$7,623,720

PHASE III

Construct picnic area with shelter
Construct 30-site campground with 3 camping cabins
Construct group camp
Upgrade Amphitheater
Resurface roads and parking areas

The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$4,317,300

The total cost to bring York River State Park to its desired future condition is \$24,745,500

STAFFING AND OPERATIONS

Staffing and operational costs at York River State Park are presently budgeted at \$386,000 annually, including salaries for 4 staff positions. With the current facilities and operational requirements, the park has an identified need for 4 additional positions and \$180,000 in funding. At complete build-out of the proposed 3 phases of development, 2 additional staff and an additional \$262,000 in operating funds will be needed. In order for the park to operate effectively and efficiently at full build-out, the park must be provided the projected staffing and operating cost identified as “existing additional needs” and the costs for the 3 development phases. The total budget for York River at full build-out is projected to be \$828,000 with 10 staff positions.

See Chart on next page.

YORK RIVER STAFFING AND OPERATING COSTS

EXISTING (FY 12)	EXISTING ADDITIONAL NEEDS *	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	FULL BUILD OUT
STAFFING					STAFFING
Park Manager					Park Manager
			Asst. Park Manager		Asst. Park Manager
Chief Ranger					Chief Ranger
	Educ. Specialist (2)				Educ. Specialist (2)
Park Ranger (2)	Park Ranger			Park Ranger	Park Ranger (4)
	Program Support Tech.				Program Support Tech.
SALARY TOTAL					SALARY TOTAL
\$208,000	\$167,000		\$59,000	\$40,000	\$474,000
WAGE TOTAL					WAGE TOTAL
\$101,000	\$8,000	\$13,000	\$52,000	\$32,000	\$206,000
OTPS TOTAL					OTPS TOTAL
\$77,000	\$5,000	\$8,000	\$37,000	\$21,000	\$148,000
TOTAL BUDGET (FY12 dollars)					TOTAL BUDGET (FY12 dollars)
\$386,000	\$180,000	\$21,000	\$148,000	\$93,000	\$828,000

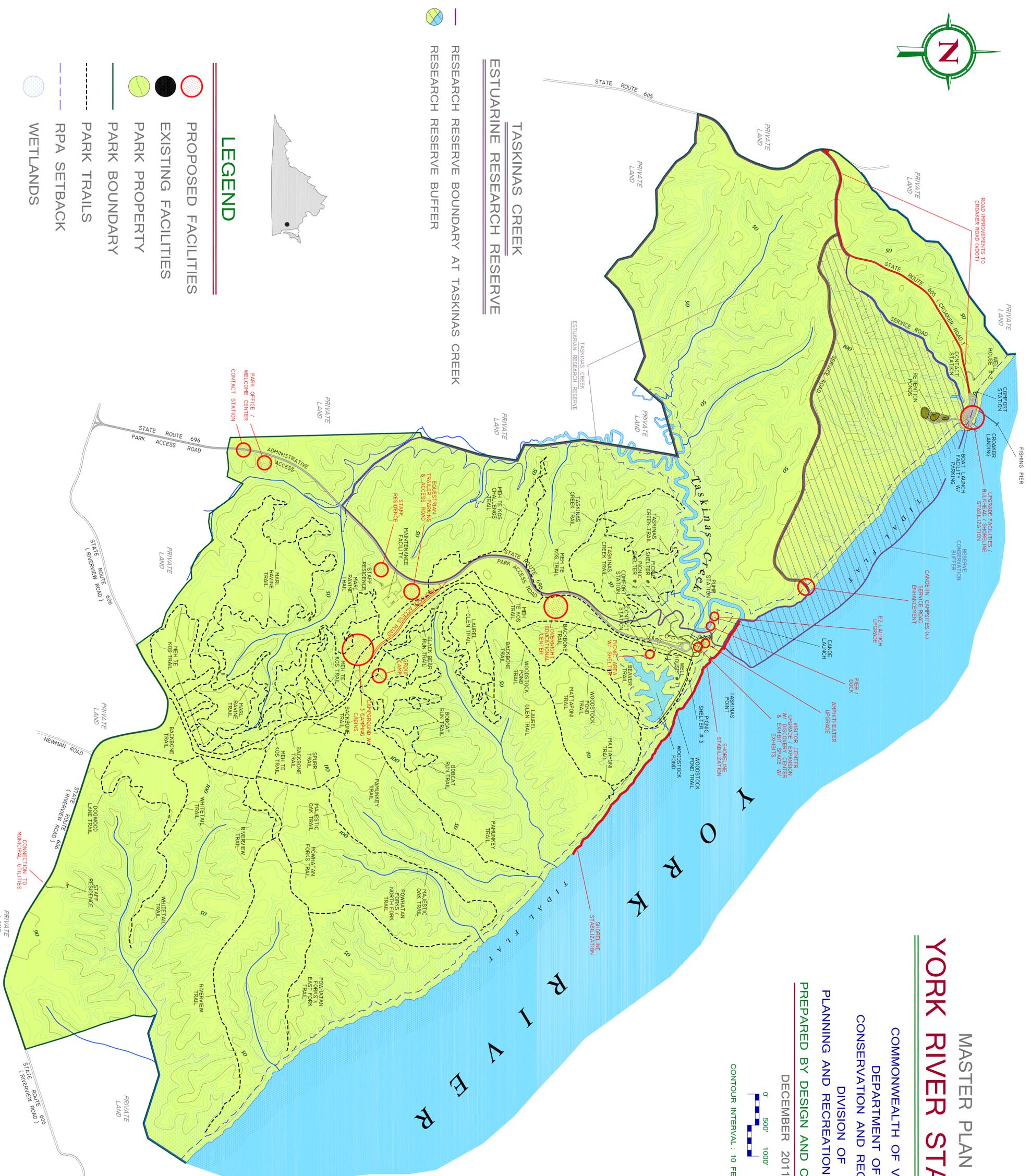
NOTE – All costs (salary, wage, OTPS (Other than Personnel Services)) are based on FY12 budget projections.

* Existing additional needs represents staff shortages that were identified as part of the 2002 re-benchmarking effort, and/or staff positions and operating costs not fully funded due to prior state wide budget reductions.



MASTER PLAN FOR YORK RIVER STATE PARK

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
DIVISION OF
PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES
PREPARED BY DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
DECEMBER 2011



- ADDITIONAL PROPOSED ITEMS:**
- EXPAND EXISTING PARK TRAILS AND EXPLORE NEW TRAIL CONNECTIONS OUTSIDE PARK BOUNDARIES. ESTABLISH BIKE LANES ON PARK ROADS WHERE FEASIBLE.
 - ENHANCE ADA ACCESS THROUGHOUT THE PARK.
 - RE-SURFACE PARK ROADS AND PARKING AREAS.
 - PLACE UTILITY LINES UNDERGROUND AND CONNECT TO JAMES CITY COUNTY WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM.

TASKINAS CREEK ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE

RESEARCH RESERVE BOUNDARY AT TASKINAS CREEK
RESEARCH RESERVE BUFFER

LEGEND

- PROPOSED FACILITIES
- EXISTING FACILITIES
- PARK PROPERTY
- PARK BOUNDARY
- PARK TRAILS
- RPA SETBACK
- WETLANDS

