



OFFICIAL  
PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
December 21, 2004

**Governor Ehrlich Helps Announce the  
Captain John Smith Four-Hundred Project**  
*Project Will Promote History Education, Environmental Conservation and the  
Creation of America's First National Water Trail*

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND: On June 2, 1608, Captain John Smith and fourteen English colonists set out from Jamestown, Virginia to explore and map the Chesapeake Bay. Smith and his men saw a Chesapeake that is scarcely imaginable today, with its incredible ecosystem intact and with a multitude of American Indian cultures thriving along its shores. On December 16, 2004, in a ceremony at the Maryland State House, **Governor Robert L. Ehrlich** participated in the announcement of the ***Captain John Smith Four-Hundred Project***, a multi-year educational initiative to commemorate the four-hundredth anniversary of this historic event.

The *Captain John Smith Four-Hundred Project* is an undertaking of ***Sultana Projects, Inc.***, a non-profit educational organization based in Chestertown, Maryland, best known for providing educational programs on board its reproduction of the 1768 schooner *Sultana*. The *Captain John Smith Four Hundred Project* is being developed as a signature product for the ***Friends of the Chesapeake National Water Trail – Retracing the Voyages of Captain John Smith***, a group whose founders include ***Gilbert Grosvenor, Chairman of the National Geographic Society, William Baker, President of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation*** and ***Patrick Noonan, Chairman Emeritus of The Conservation Fund***. The mission of the *Friends of the Chesapeake National Water Trail* is to celebrate the unique history and environment of the Chesapeake Bay by creating a lasting legacy for future generations through the establishment of America's first National Water Trail.

As part of the ceremony Governor Ehrlich and ***Maryland Department of Natural Resources Secretary Ronald Franks*** presented representatives of *Sultana Projects* and the *Friends of the Chesapeake National Water Trail* with a timber from Maryland's famous ***Wye Oak*** Tree. The Wye Oak timber will be used in the building of a replica of the small open boat or "shallop" that Smith employed during his voyage on the Chesapeake. The shallop will be built at the *Sultana Shipyard* in Chestertown, Maryland under the direction of ***Master Shipwright John E. Swain***, one of America's most highly regarded traditional boatbuilders. Swain and a team of talented craftsman and volunteers will begin work on the replica shallop early in 2005 and will rely exclusively on 17<sup>th</sup> century tools and construction techniques. Upon its completion in 2006, the shallop will be exhibited in museums throughout the United States and England before setting out with a fifteen-man crew in the summer of 2007 to fully retrace Smith's expedition. The 2007 voyage will be the culmination of a three-year, multi-organizational effort to educate students from around the region about this

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important episode in Chesapeake history. Sultana Projects is currently working with the *Maryland State Department of Education* and the *Friends of the Chesapeake National Water Trail* to develop an educational curriculum that will inform students about Smith's explorations and the American Indian cultures that inhabited the Chesapeake at time of first contact.

On Monday December 20, 2004 Sultana Projects, Inc. also announced that it had received significant grants to fund the project from both The Conservation Fund and the National Geographic Society Expeditions Council.

*"This project will preserve and promote the very things that make Maryland a treasure: our history, our culture and our environment,"* Governor Ehrlich said. *"I want to thank our partners in this project for their vision and commitment to preserving Maryland for future generations."*

Joyce Huber Smith, Chairman of *Sultana Projects*, highlighted the timeliness of the undertaking. *"For its time and place, Smith's 1608 voyage was as epic as Lewis and Clark's venture nearly 200 years later. Covering more than 1,700 miles in just over three months, Smith's voyage took him from the Virginia Capes to Great Falls on the Potomac to the confluence of the Sassafras, Elk, Northeast and Susquehanna Rivers at the head of the Bay. The four-hundredth anniversary of this important voyage is a once in a lifetime opportunity to bring alive this critical piece of history for students from throughout the region."*

Commenting on behalf of the *Friends of the Chesapeake National Water Trail*, The Conservation Fund's Chairman Emeritus Pat Noonan stated, *"It is our hope that this replica of Captain John Smith's shallop will encourage the creation of a Chesapeake National Water Trail by the National Park Service. This historic water trail will inspire generations of kayakers, canoeists, and skippers to follow Smith's journey and explore this national treasure, the Chesapeake Bay."*

Chesapeake Bay Foundation President Will Baker commented, *"Connecting people to the Bay and its rivers through the Chesapeake National Water Trail will help develop a constituency who are committed to the Bay's restoration. The Bay of today is operating at only about 25% of the productivity of the system John Smith explored."*

- End of Press Release -

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