

TILGHMAN ISLAND AND THE BAY HUNDRED WATER TRAILS

TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Where Land and Water Meet

*Produced through a partnership between the
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
and Talbot County*

TILGHMAN ISLAND AND THE BAY HUNDRED

Where Land and Water Meet

Talbot County is located in the heart of Maryland's Eastern Shore. Founded around 1661, it's named for Lady Grace Talbot, sister of Lord Baltimore, the first proprietary governor of Maryland.

The section of Talbot County stretching from Claiborne to Tilghman Island has long been called the Bay Hundred. In colonial times, the entire region was sectioned into “hundreds” for administrative purposes. The term can be traced to medieval England, when shires were divided into segments that could produce 100 fighting men. Today, the county's 5th voting district, which includes Claiborne, Wittman, McDaniel, Sherwood and Tilghman Island, is still called the Bay Hundred by long-time residents.

Tilghman Island is the largest of the Bay Hundred villages. Known simply as Tilghman to the postman and locals, it's among the last of the authentic watermen's villages that once lined the shores of the Bay. Tilghman is located at the tip of the peninsula nestled between the Chesapeake Bay, Harris Creek and the Choptank River. It is connected to the mainland by a single-leaf bascule drawbridge that spans Knapps Narrows, a shallow ribbon of water that makes this an island.

Measuring three miles long and just one mile at its widest point, Tilghman Island is well suited for exploration by land or water. It is home to generations of working watermen, as well as a collection of modern restaurants, bed-and-breakfasts, and country inns. The island offers the perfect balance of nature, water, and culture. The recreational resources of the Bay Hundred include a mix of public landings and boating access sites that provide adventure seekers with access to the natural wonders, and fertile wildlife habitat where land and water meet.



Historic Bay Hundred Map

Working the Land and Water

Mark Sandlin for Talbot County Tourism



Workboats

The Chesapeake Bay

The Chesapeake Bay is North America's largest and most productive estuary. It remains a dynamic natural system with humans as an integral part of its enormous six-state watershed. Restoration of the Chesapeake Bay's waters as habitat for fish, crabs, oysters, other living resources — and the watermen that still follow their annual rhythms — is a natural challenge.

The Chesapeake Bay is young in geological terms, just 12,000 years old. It is the product of rising ocean waters following the last Ice Age which drowned the ancient valley of the Susquehanna River. Scientists studying prehistoric evidence from pollen, bones and the teeth of animals such as the mastodon and giant beaver have reconstructed the Delmarva Peninsula's "lost landscape" deeply buried beneath wind-blown soils and sands. Other lost landscapes are more recent, resulting from rising waters which erode low-lying shorelines and wash away entire islands.

Working the Water

The evolution of the Chesapeake Bay clipper-schooner ship in the 18th century ranks among the most important events in the history of naval architecture and had a worldwide influence on global trade. The shallow bottomed, Bay-built vessels constructed in this region draw on traditional and new designs directly responding to the character of the waterways and the requirements of the watermen and boaters who ply these waters.



Talbot County Tourism

Skipjack Rebecca T. Ruark

Among the most notable of the Bay-built vessels is the skipjack. The skipjack evolved at the end of the Age of Sail and its hull and large sail area make it ideal for dredging over shallow oyster beds. These boats were a common sight throughout the Chesapeake Bay during the era of massive oyster harvests. Today, only a few original skipjacks remain. Among them is the *Rebecca T. Ruark*. Built in 1886, she is one of the oldest skipjacks in Maryland and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Her home port is Dogwood Harbor.

Though the rich seafood harvested from the Chesapeake Bay was common fare during the Colonial era, by the end of the 19th century the lowly oyster became the food of choice for the newly rich and transformed the region's economy.

Today, seafood is still in demand and a variety of commercial and recreational boats are used to harvest fish, crabs, clams, and oysters from Bay waters. Tilghman Island is one of the few traditional watermen's communities still surviving in Maryland.

Mark Sandlin for Talbot County Tourism



Steamed crabs are a signature dish in Maryland.

Farming the Peninsula

This part of Maryland's Eastern Shore is known to historians as the Breadbasket of the American Revolution. Much of the area is still in agriculture and is known for its rich soil and scenic grain fields. The area is one of the oldest working landscapes in North America and the largest single area of agricultural land left on the Atlantic Coast. Thanks in large part to local and state efforts to protect farmland, it is also one of the most protected landscapes outside the American West.



Mark Sandlin for Talbot County Tourism

Much of the Bay Hundred is farmland.

Early conversion to wheat from tobacco in the 18th century proved to be a particularly successful move for the farmers in Talbot County. Cultivation of wheat allowed farmers to diversify their yields and move away from the boom and bust of tobacco. The rich colonial towns on the Eastern Shore relied in part on the wealth from the region's plantations, and many millers in the region grew wealthy grinding flour to ship to the West Indies. Today, sustaining a working landscape of grain and specialty crop farming that continues to enhance the quality of life and serve as a community asset is endorsed in the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan.

Wildlife Habitat



Maryland DNR

The waterways around Tilghman provide habitat for oysters and other species.

While on the water or exploring the shoreline, you may see schools of fish, blue crabs, clam and oyster beds, and other marine wildlife. During the summer, vast numbers of rays and skates can be seen feeding along shoals and sandbars. On rare occasions, dolphins, porpoises and sea turtles can also be seen.

Birding and Wildlife Viewing

Many species of birds and waterfowl frequent this area of Talbot County. Birds of prey such as eagles, hawks and owls are commonly seen here. Gulls, terns and smaller migratory birds are common residents as well.

Fish and Aquatic Life

The waterways surrounding the Tilghman peninsula provide extensive habitat for a variety of species. The shallow creeks and marshes also harbor a multitude of underwater organisms. In the spring and summer, bay grasses and other subaquatic vegetation (SAV) appear and provide important habitat for young crabs, grass shrimp and juvenile fish.



Ink Byers for Maryland DNR

Osprey



Great Blue Heron

Black Walnut Point and Black Walnut Cove are located at the southern end of Tilghman Island. This area is an excellent place to observe swan, geese and ducks feeding in the shallows. Migratory birds frequently stop to rest, feed and roost here before crossing the Choptank River.

Heron, egrets, sandpipers and other wading birds are often seen in the area of Front and Back creeks. These birds frequent the marsh, mudflats and shallow sandbars. Terns and gulls are often seen perched on the pilings that line Knapps Narrows.

During the migratory season, numerous geese and diving ducks can be observed resting and feeding in Claiborne Harbor. During the spring and summer, ospreys nest on pilings and eagles can often be seen fishing near the Claiborne jetty.

Other Points of Interest in the Area

The Village of Claiborne was once a busy port for a ferry service that brought passengers and automobiles across the Chesapeake Bay. When the Bay Bridge was built in 1952, the ferry stopped running.

Knapps Narrows must be crossed by bridge to reach Tilghman Island. The current drawbridge was installed in 1998. The former bridge was moved inland and now serves as the entrance to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in nearby St. Michaels. The Knapps Narrows drawbridge opens between 10,000 and 15,000 times per year for boat traffic, making it one of the busiest drawbridges in the world.



The drawbridge at Knapps Narrows

Phillips Wharf Environmental Center is an education center, located on Tilghman Island, that teaches people to care for the Chesapeake Bay and its inhabitants. Visit the center to learn about the environment and the economic importance a sustainable seafood harvest has on the community. Onsite activities include touch tanks and interpretive exhibits. The property remains a working waterfront and is the last active oyster house in Talbot County. Phillips Wharf has a public water access site which provides direct access to local water trails as well as the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.

The Tilghman Watermen's Museum is housed in the historic Lee House on the east side of Tilghman Island Road. The building's W-shaped architectural design is said to have allowed air to be continuously and evenly distributed throughout the house. It is one of 13 "W" houses built on the island between 1890



Tilghman Waterman's Muesum

and 1900 and one of five remaining today. In addition to audio and video stories about the island's working watermen, the museum features works of art, model boats, and other artifacts.

Dogwood Harbor is one of the true beauty spots of the Eastern Shore. Sweeping views of Harris Creek and the Choptank River can be seen from the harbor, and visitors can watch local watermen unload the catch of the day. The harbor is also home to a fleet of working skipjacks including the *Rebecca T. Ruark*.



Talbot County Tourism

Sharps Island Lighthouse

Sharps Island Lighthouse is a tilted, sparkplug lighthouse located 3 miles south-southwest of the southern tip of Tilghman Island. It roughly marks the spot that was once known as Sharps Island. Farms, forests and orchards covered the former island whose landmass once measured more than 900 acres. The last remnant of the island washed away in the 1950s and now only the lighthouse remains. The lighthouse was constructed in 1882 to warn travelers of the hazardous shoals at the mouth of the Choptank. Moving ice knocked it askew when the Chesapeake Bay began to thaw after freezing solid in the winter of 1977. The light leans about 15 degrees.

Black Walnut Point Natural Resources Management Area (NRMA) is a 53-acre site located on the southern tip of Tilghman Island. It is operated by the Maryland Park

Service and offers incredible views of the Chesapeake Bay. Rugged paths crisscross the property and a dirt road traces the water's edge. Fishing and bird watching are the primary activities here. The NRMA is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. The Black Walnut Point Inn, a privately operated bed and breakfast, occupies 6 acres of the property but is not open for visitation by the general public.

Rebuilding Poplar Island

Northwest of Tilghman lies Poplar Island. This isolated site was home to one of the first English settlements on the Eastern Shore. By the late 19th century, it supported a store, school, post office, and large waterman's community. Once there were many islands like this in the Chesapeake Bay region but, through various natural processes, these islands are being lost. Poplar Island reduced in size from approximately 1,100 acres, as recorded in 1847, to just 5 acres in 1993.

Today, many federal, state and local entities are working together to rebuild the island. The restoration includes the creation of uplands and wetlands offering a diversity of habitat for a variety of Chesapeake Bay wildlife. In 2014, a project was authorized for a 575-acre expansion that is scheduled to begin as early as 2016 and increases the total project size to 1,715 acres. This allows for placement of 68 million cubic yards of material from maintenance dredging by the Maryland Port Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Channels Federal Navigation Project, which will be used to create upland and wetland habitat.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Progress continues at Poplar Island.

The project is already a national model for successful environmental restoration. The island is home to more than 100 species of birds, including common and least terns, cattle and snowy egrets, osprey, and the American black duck. Scientists also report that more than 1,000 diamondback terrapins, Maryland's official state reptile, hatch annually on the island.

Though not open for public use, school groups, community organizations and individuals may schedule tours and educational programs. Prior notification is required as tours fill quickly. Contact the Poplar Island Tour Coordinator at poplartours@menv.com or call 410-770-6503.

Leave No Trace

Please practice the following stewardship principles of Leave No Trace:

1) Plan ahead and prepare.

- ◆ Know your route and the limitations of yourself and your group.
- ◆ Carry the proper equipment and clothing.
- ◆ Notify someone of the time you intend to return.

2) Stay in designated areas.

- ◆ Keep to designated trails and public areas.
- ◆ Keep groups small and avoid trampling plants.
- ◆ Protect wildlife and your food — store rations securely.
- ◆ Leave recreation areas and picnic sites cleaner than you found them.

3) Dispose of waste properly.

- ◆ Clean fish at designated areas.
- ◆ Pick up litter and dispose of waste in proper receptacles or take it with you.

4) Leave what you find and be considerate of other visitors.

- ◆ Respect natural and cultural heritage — leave all items as you found them.
- ◆ Keep noise to a minimum — enjoy the music of nature.
- ◆ Respect private property and the privacy of others.

For more information on Leave No Trace ethics visit www.lnt.org, call 800-332-4100, or contact your local resource managers for additional guidance.



Wildlife Viewing Ethics

1) Act responsibly.

Stay clear of nests, dens and rookeries. Do not touch or feed wild animals. Do not allow pets to interfere with wild animals.

2) Avoid getting too close.

View wild birds and other animals from an appropriate distance. If animals change their behavior, appear nervous, keep looking at you with head up and ears pointing toward you, or if an animal doesn't resume its normal activity, then you are too close.

3) Make your observation brief, then move on.

If you are looking at baby birds in a nest or fish in a pond, remember that they can't leave and that you are interrupting normal behavior.

4) *Don't chase an animal.*

Don't chase an animal while trying to get a better glimpse or photo. Don't follow animals or behave in any way that might be seen as harassment. And don't allow your pets to do it either.

5) *Move quietly and slowly.*

At popular viewing sites, limit your movement and noise level so you do not distract the wildlife. Loud noises, sudden movements or an unannounced approach can startle and cause stress to animals.

6) *Do not use calls or whistles, or try to rouse animals in any way.*

This can interrupt breeding cycles, drive birds from their territories, or make animals "call shy" so they don't respond to the real thing.

7) *Divide large groups of people into small groups.*

Small groups of people are less disturbing, usually talk more quietly, and tend to act in a more responsible way than big groups do.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

View wildlife responsibly.

Paddling and Boating Safety Tips



U.S. Coast Guard

Paddle with others.

Although many Talbot County creeks and coves are suitable for beginners, there are extensive areas of open water that are subject to tidal influence, high winds and strong currents. Be prepared! Review these guidelines before getting on the water. Those new to the water can take part in group paddle trips offered by outfitters and more experienced boaters can create their own adventures that can range from a few hours to all day.

- ◆ **Wear a properly-fitted, U.S. Coast Guard approved, lifejacket** while on the water. (See *Maryland Boating Regulations* on page 9)
- ◆ **Boat with others** and carry a spare paddle. Boating safety increases with numbers so boat with others. Leave a copy of your "float plan" with a land-based contact.
- ◆ **Know your route** and any potential hazards along it. Review maps, charts, river levels, and weather conditions before launching. Be aware of obstacles such as fallen trees, debris, islands and rocks that you may encounter along the route.
- ◆ **Dress appropriately** for the weather, air and water temperatures and always wear protective footwear.
- ◆ **Carry a supply of food and water** adequate for the length of your trip. Stay hydrated and protected from the sun year-round to minimize the danger of dehydration and heat exhaustion.

- ◆ **Never paddle farther from shore than you are prepared to swim** and stay at least 100 yards away from all moving vessels, piers and other restricted areas.
- ◆ **Keep your weight centered and as low as possible at all times, especially when entering and exiting a boat.** If your boat flips over, remain calm. Hold on to your paddle and the boat if possible. Try to reach a calm, shallow spot or the shoreline, then empty the boat and re-enter.
- ◆ **Be alert to weather changes.** Thunderstorms can be common during the warm weather months and are usually accompanied by temperature drops, increased winds and dark clouds. Get off the water immediately if you see lightning.

For more information on paddling and boating safety visit
<http://cgaux.org> or
www.dnr.state.md.us/boating/safety

Maryland Boating and Fishing Regulations

Personal Flotation Devices: Boats propelled by oars or paddles are required to carry one PFD of either Type I, II, III, or V for each person on board, regardless of length. All motorized craft 16-65 feet must carry a Type I, II, III, or V for each person on board, plus one extra Type IV. Anyone under the age of 13, in a boat less than 21 feet in length, while underway, must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket all times. (MD State Law).

Boat Registration: All boats, whether commercial or recreational, must be registered in Maryland if it is: equipped with any kind of primary or auxiliary mechanical propulsion; and used in Maryland most in a calendar year. U.S. Coast Guard documented vessels using Maryland waters are NOT exempt from the vessel excise tax. When used principally in Maryland, documented vessels must display a documented use decal. For more information visit dnr2.maryland.gov/Boating/Pages/registration.aspx.

Fishing Licenses: Maryland’s recreational fishing requirements and rules are divided into Tidal (Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries) and Non-Tidal. Annual licenses require a fee for Maryland residents and non-residents, which allows fishing from January 1 through December 31. A 3-day or 5-day license can also be purchased for a reduced fee. For more information visit dnr.state.md.us/service/fishing_license.asp.



U.S. Coast Guard

Wear a Coast Guard approved PFD.

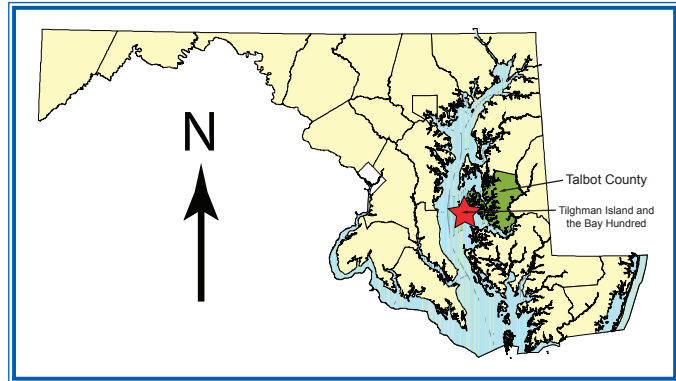
Consider a Shuttle

To enhance your water trail experience along routes that have more than one access point, make plans to shuttle your vessels ahead of time. The idea of a shuttle is to launch your vessel at the upstream point of access and your vehicle at the downstream destination. This is easily done with two or more vehicles. Employ a friend or hire a professional shuttle service to take you to your starting point.

TILGHMAN ISLAND AND THE BAY HUNDRED

Where Land and Water Meet

Talbot County is located in the heart of Maryland's Eastern Shore and, it offers the perfect balance of rural simplicity and urban refinement. The County has a wealth of historic, natural and cultural resources. Easily accessible by car, boat and small plane, it is an ideal location for a weekend getaway or an extended stay. With more than 600 miles of shoreline and expanses of open water, Talbot County is a terrific place for paddling, fishing, birdwatching, and exploring the Chesapeake Bay and some of its tributaries.



This guide highlights five water trails in Talbot County, identified on the index map below, and depicts a diverse mix of opportunities for paddlers of all levels. Some of the routes are in sheltered areas with moderate wind and current conditions that are ideal for novices and families. Other routes, such as those along the larger rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, are primarily open water and exposed to wind, waves, and tidal influences. These routes offer more challenging options for experienced paddlers.

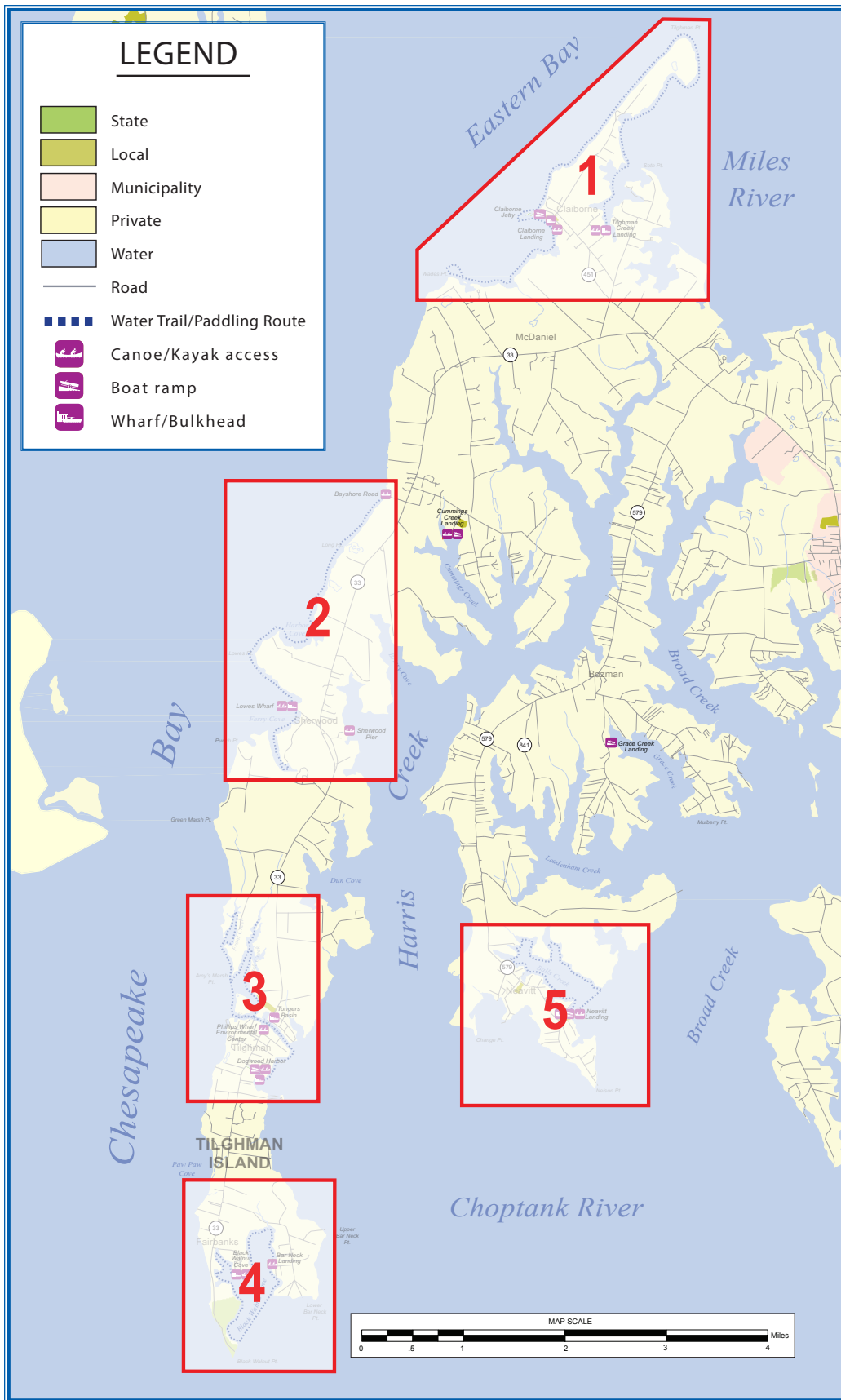
These maps are meant to be used as a reference for the location of existing public boating access sites and facilities. It is strongly recommended that you consult a range of other detailed maps, charts and supplemental information geared to your specific needs while planning for extended excursions.

Talbot County Permits, Fees, and Regulations

Talbot County requires a valid permit to be displayed when using a Talbot County public landing/ramp for launching or loading a trailered vessel from the water or for parking a trailer at the facility. Visit www.talbotparksandrec.com for details regarding where permits can be purchased and how they must be displayed. Motorized and non-motorized boats are allowed to launch from boat ramps but the public landings without boat ramps are limited to non-motorized vessels only.

- All landings are closed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. No trespassing is allowed during these hours. Violators will be prosecuted.
- All sites are “Carry-in, Carry-out” trash-free facilities. The fine for littering is \$100.
- It is unlawful to dock boats in loading/unloading zones.
- Boats or equipment must not be left at landings. After 5 days all materials will be removed by the Talbot County Landings Office at the owner’s expense.
- Obey all “No Fishing, No Crabbing, and No Swimming” signs where posted.
- Vehicles are not to be placed for sale at public landings.
- Camping is prohibited at all public landings.
- Open campfires are prohibited.
- The discharging of firearms is absolutely prohibited at all public landings.

For additional information on fees and permits, contact the Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation at 410-770-8050 or visit www.talbotparksandrec.com.



Respect Private Property - Do Not Trespass

The water access sites on this map welcome the public but there are extensive privately owned lands along each of the water trails. Respect private property. Do not trespass.

1

Eastern Bay and Tilghman Point Trail Claiborne to Tilghman Creek Landing and Wade's Point

These routes lead adventurous paddlers along the narrow peninsula between Claiborne and Tilghman Point. The area features agricultural fields, stretches of sandy shoreline, and forest buffer. Less experienced paddlers can stay in the calmer, more sheltered waters of Tilghman Creek, or the immediate environs of Claiborne Landing.

Distance: The distance from Claiborne Landing to Tilghman Creek Landing is approximately 5.2 miles one-way. The Claiborne Landing to Wade's Point loop trail is approximately 3.5 miles roundtrip if you stay close to the shoreline.

Difficulty: These trails are best suited for experienced paddlers since the routes are exposed to the open waters of the Eastern Bay where weather, wind and tidal conditions can be extreme. Paddlers should also be prepared to encounter significant wave and wake action resulting from the passing of larger vessels. Start at Claiborne Landing and follow the shoreline heading northwest from the end of the jetty. Tilghman Point is approximately 2.75 miles from Claiborne. Go around the point and head southeast into the Miles River. Keep the shoreline to your right and continue south into Tilghman Creek and Tilghman Creek Landing.

Claiborne Landing

GPS Location:

38°50'14.603"N Long.
76°16'49.208"W

Managed by: Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation, 410-770-8050

Amenities: This site has a single-lane, concrete ramp suitable for launching canoes, kayaks and small motorized boats. Non-motorized watercraft can also be launched from the beach area located south of the parking lot. The landing has a large paved parking lot. **Hours and fee:** The landing is closed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. A valid Talbot County permit must be displayed when using this site for launching or loading a trailered vessel from the water or for parking a trailer. **Directions:** From MD Route 50, take MD Route 322 (Easton Parkway). Turn onto MD Route 33 west, towards St. Michaels and Tilghman Island. Follow the road to the right as it turns into Claiborne Road. Turn left onto Claiborne Landing Road and continue to the end. **Address:** 10500 Bayside Drive, Claiborne, MD

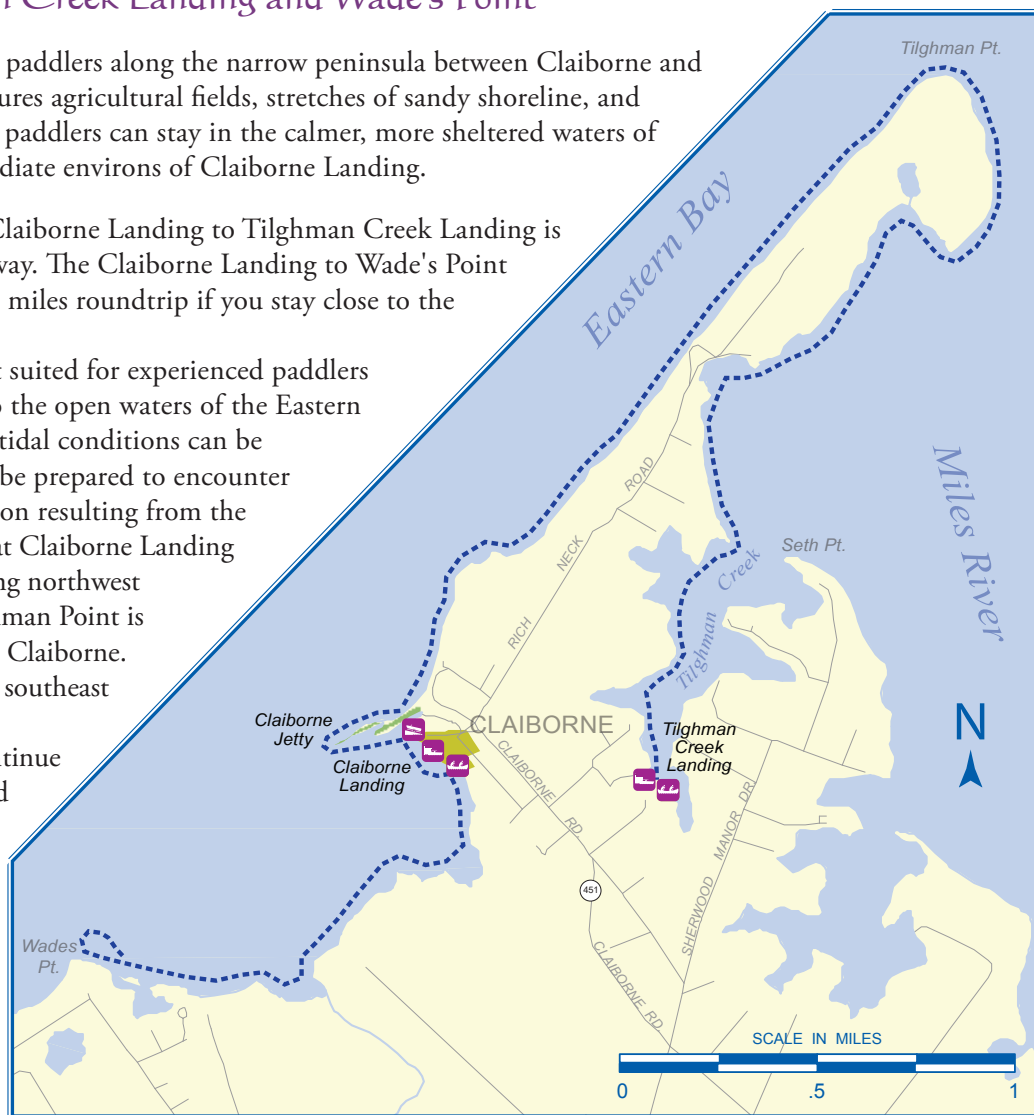
Tilghman Creek Landing

GPS Location: Lat. 38°50'6.498"N Long. 76°16'4.707"W

Managed by: Talbot County Dept. of Parks & Recreation, 410-770-8050

Amenities: The water level at this site can be very shallow at times, but is generally suitable for launching non-motorized watercraft. Vessels must be lowered over a bulkhead to reach the water. Parking is available adjacent to the wharf.

Hours and fee: The landing is closed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. A valid Talbot County permit must be displayed when using this site for launching or loading a trailered vessel from the water or for parking a trailer. **Directions:** From MD Route 50, take MD Route 322 (Easton Parkway). Turn onto MD Route 33 west, towards St. Michaels and Tilghman Island. Take a right onto Claiborne Road. Turn right at Cockey Road and continue to the end. **Address:** 23400 Cockey Road, St. Michaels, MD



2

Chesapeake Bay Trail

Bayshore Road to Lowes Wharf and Cabin Cove



These routes take paddlers along the open waters of the Chesapeake Bay. The shoreline is marked by agricultural fields and sparse development. Launch from Bayshore Road and head south following the shoreline. Harbor Cove marks the approach to Lowes Point and beyond the point is Ferry Cove. Lowes Wharf will be visible to the southeast as you come around Lowes Point. The access point for non-motorized vessels is located on the south side of the wharf.

Paddlers who want a more leisurely and shorter route can start at Lowes Wharf and head south into Cabin Cove. This route is also recommended for less-experienced paddlers.

Distance: The distance from Bayshore Road to Lowes Wharf is approximately 3.33 miles round-trip. The Lowes Wharf to Cabin Cove loop trail is approximately 1.82 miles round-trip.

Difficulty: The route from Bayshore Road to Lowes Wharf is heavily influenced by wind, tide, and weather conditions typical of the open waters of the Eastern and Chesapeake Bays. This route is recommended for experienced paddlers who are prepared to deal with these conditions. The Lowes Wharf to Cabin Cove loop trail is a good alternative for those seeking a shorter, more sheltered route.

Bayshore Road

GPS Location: Lat. 38°47'48.297"N Long. 76°18'35.7"W

Managed by: Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation, 410-770-8050

Amenities: This site is for launching non-motorized vessels only. Boats must be carried a short distance to a sandy beach. Parking at this site is limited but overflow parking can be accommodated along the west side of Bayshore Road.

Hours and fee: The landing is closed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. A valid Talbot County permit must be displayed when using this site for launching or loading a trailered vessel from the water or for parking a trailer at this facility.

Directions: From MD Route 50, take MD Route 322 (Easton Parkway). Turn onto MD Route 33 west, towards St. Michaels and Tilghman Island. Turn right onto Bay Shore Road and continue to the end of the road.

Address: 22150 Bayshore Road, Wittman, MD

Lowes Wharf

GPS Location: Lat. 38°45'56.837"N Long. 76°19'40.002"W

Managed by: Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation, 410-770-8050

Amenities: The water level at this site can be shallow at times but it is generally suitable for launching non-motorized watercraft. Vessels must be lowered over a bulkhead to launch.

Hours and fee: The landing is closed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. A valid Talbot County permit must be displayed when using this site for launching or loading a trailered vessel from the water or for parking a trailer at this facility.

Directions: From MD Route 50, take MD Route 322 (Easton Parkway). Turn onto MD Route 33 west, towards St. Michaels and Tilghman Island. Take a right onto Lowes Wharf Road and continue to the parking lot. **Address:** 21700 Lowes Wharf Road, Sherwood, MD

3

Knapps Narrows and Three Creeks Trail

Phillips Wharf Environmental Center (PWEC) or Dogwood Harbor to Front, Back, and Harris Creeks



This trail provides three options to accommodate paddlers of all skill levels ranging from leisurely floats to more challenging open water paddling. The waterways for these routes feature working waterfronts, the Chesapeake Bay and scenic marshes abundant with wildlife, marsh plants and forested areas. There are many options to extend any or all of these trails. Launch from either the Phillips Wharf Environmental Center or Dogwood Harbor to start your journey.

Distance: The loop trail from Phillips Wharf to Front Creek is approximately 3 miles round-trip and the PWEC loop to Back Creek is approximately 2.5 miles round-trip. The distance between Phillips Wharf and Dogwood Harbor is approximately 1 mile.

Difficulty: The open waters of the Chesapeake Bay and Harris Creek can be challenging due to exposure to winds, waves, tides and motorized boat traffic. The Back Creek Trail is recommended for novice paddlers or those wanting a more leisurely experience.

Front Creek: This route is recommended for experienced paddlers since a section of this route is on the open waters of the Chesapeake Bay. Launch and head northwest following the northern shoreline out of Knapps Narrows. Use caution and be aware that the Narrows typically has heavy boat traffic, especially during the boating season. To reach Front Creek paddle out of Knapps Narrows past the entrance to Back Creek following the shoreline to your right. Front Creek ends in shallow water.

Back Creek: This route is relatively sheltered and paddlers will pass through working waterfronts, low marshes and forested areas. The waterway is accessible for several miles but there are no support facilities or designated rest areas so paddlers need to monitor their distance.

Knapps Narrows and Harris Creek: This route takes paddlers through Knapps Narrows and Harris Creek. Launch from either the Phillips Wharf or Dogwood Harbor and explore Boatman's Cove and the shoreline along Harris Creek. Be prepared for traffic associated with large motorized boats and commercial watermen. This area is extremely busy during summer months.

Phillips Wharf Environmental Center

GPS Location: Lat. 38°43'8.80"N Long. 76°19'56.72"W

Managed by: Phillips Wharf Environmental Center, 410-886-9200

Amenities: This site has a single lane sand and concrete launch area suitable for launching kayaks and canoes. There is a transfer bench adjacent to the launch and a portable restroom. A gravel lot provides public parking adjacent to the launch area. The Environmental Center is open to visitors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Monday.

Hours and fee: Dawn to dusk. No fee required, but donations are accepted.

Directions: From MD Route 50, take MD Route 322 (Easton Parkway). Turn onto MD Route 33 west, towards St. Michaels and Tilghman Island. Cross the Knapps Narrows Bridge and turn onto the first driveway on the right.

Address: 6129 Tilghman Island Road, Tilghman, MD

Dogwood Harbor

GPS Location: Lat. 38°42'46.11"N Long. 76°20'3.40"W

Managed by: Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation, 410-770-8050

Amenities: This site has a large paved parking lot for trailers and cars. The concrete boat ramp serves as access for motorized and non-motorized vessels. During summer months this site can be very busy, so plan ahead and be prepared to use an alternate launch site if the lot is full.

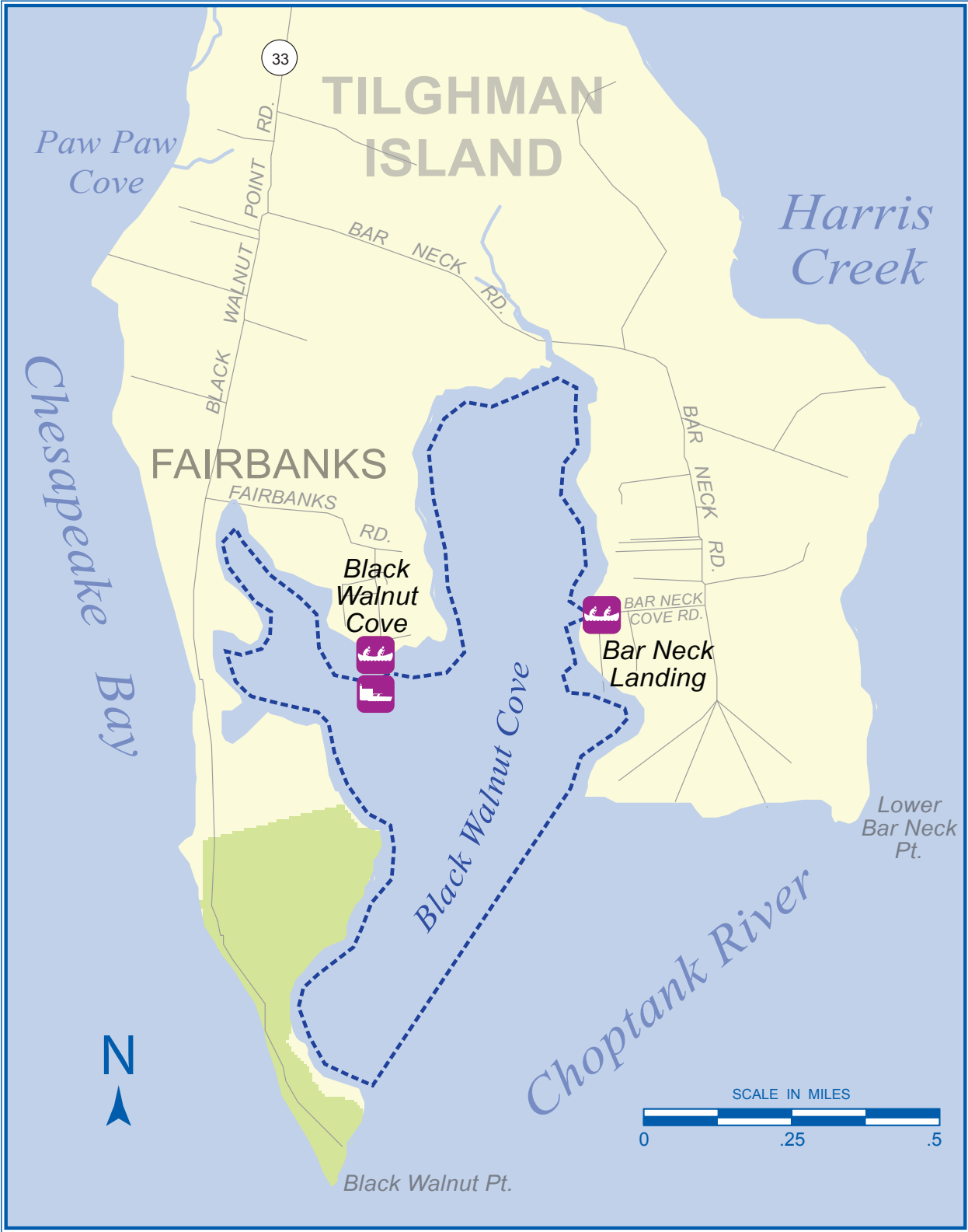
Hours and fee: The landing is closed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. A valid Talbot County permit must be displayed when using this site for launching or loading a trailered vessel from the water or parking a trailer.

Directions: From MD Route 50, take MD Route 322 (Easton Parkway). Turn onto MD Route 33 west, towards St. Michaels and Tilghman Island. Take a left onto Gibsontown Road then go right onto Dogwood Harbor Road.

Address: 21481 Dogwood Harbor Road, Tilghman, MD

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Black Walnut Cove Trail
A loop trail in Black Walnut Cove



This trail takes paddlers to the southernmost point of Tilghman Island where Black Walnut Cove meets the Choptank River. Start your trip from either Black Walnut Cove or Bar Neck Landing.

Distance: The distance covered by the entire loop trail is approximately 3.5 miles but paddlers can easily alter their route to cover shorter or longer distances.

Difficulty: This trail is relatively easy but be careful when crossing the mouth of Black Walnut Cove since this area is more exposed to conditions along the Choptank River.

Black Walnut Cove

GPS Location: Lat. 38°40'59.004"N Long. 76°20'17.5"W

Managed by: Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation, 410-770-8050

Amenities: The access at this site features a bulkhead with ladder and a fishing pier. Non-motorized watercraft can be launched from here but must be lowered to the water from the bulkhead. Parking is extremely limited.

Hours and fee: The landing is closed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. A valid Talbot County permit must be displayed when using this site for launching or loading a trailered vessel from the water or parking a trailer.

Directions: From MD Route 50, take MD Route 322 (Easton Parkway). Turn onto MD Route 33 west, towards St. Michaels and Tilghman Island. Turn left onto Fairbanks Road. Continue to the end of the road to reach the landing.

Address: 4800 Fairbanks Road, Tilghman, MD

Bar Neck Landing

GPS Location: Lat. 38°41'2.718"N Long. 76°19'54.596"W

Managed by: Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation, 410-770-8050

Amenities: This site features a floating dock suitable for launching non-motorized watercraft. Parking is limited but additional parking is available along the shoulder of Bar Neck Cove Road.

Hours and fee: The landing is closed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. A valid Talbot County permit must be displayed when using this site for launching or loading a trailered vessel from the water or parking a trailer.

Directions: From MD Route 50, take MD Route 322 (Easton Parkway). Turn onto MD Route 33 west, towards St. Michaels and Tilghman Island. Take a left onto Bar Neck Road. Take a right onto Bar Neck Cove Road and continue to the end.

Address: 21560 Bar Neck Cove Road, Tilghman, MD

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Balls Creek Trail

A loop trail starting at Neavitt Landing

This trail is remote but very scenic. Since the loop trail starts and ends at Neavitt Landing, paddlers can either head north along Balls Creek or cross the mouth of the creek and follow the opposite shoreline to make the loop.

This trail provides paddlers with contrasting views. The southwest side of the creek is primarily residential while the northeast side is mostly agricultural fields and natural areas. Paddlers who want a more challenging experience can easily access the larger waters of the Choptank River or Broad Creek from Neavitt.

Distance: The distance covered by the entire loop trail is approximately 3 miles.

Difficulty: This trail is relatively easy but caution should be taken when crossing the mouth of Balls Creek since this area is more exposed to conditions along the Choptank River and Broad Creek.

Neavitt Landing

GPS Location: Lat. 38°43'12.807"N Long. 76°16'35.095"W

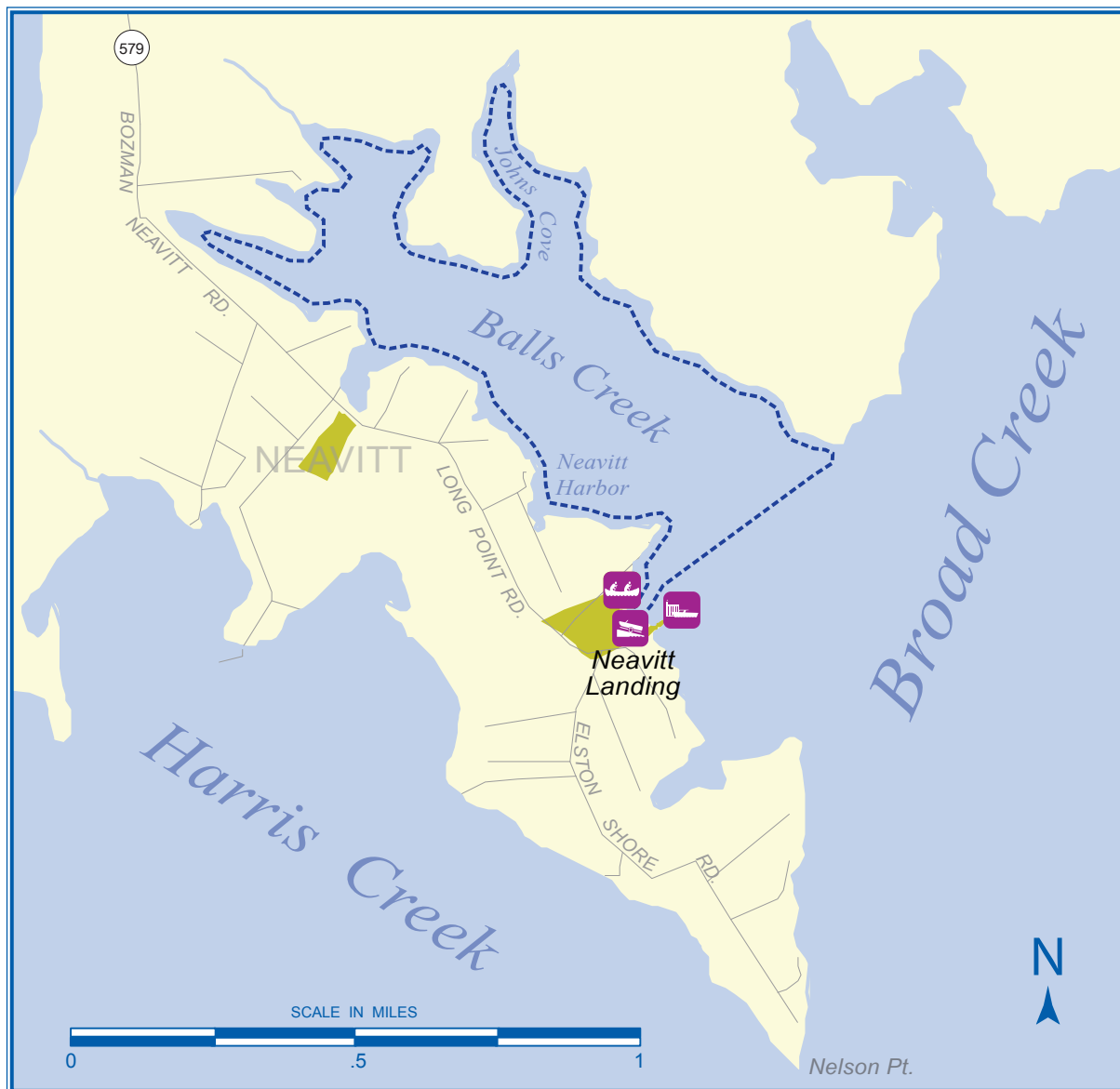
Managed by: Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation, 410-770-8050

Amenities: This site features a bulkhead with a ladder and a fishing pier. Non-motorized watercraft can be launched from here but must be lowered to the water from the bulkhead. Parking is extremely limited.

Hours and fee: The landing is closed between the hours of 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. A valid Talbot County permit must be displayed when using this site for launching or loading a trailered vessel from the water or parking a trailer.

Directions: From MD Route 50/301 continue following MD Route 50 east. Turn right onto MD Route 322 (Easton Parkway) south and continue on MD Route 322. Turn right at MD Route 33 (St. Michaels Road) west and turn left onto MD Route 579 (Bozman Neavitt Rd) south. The road turns into Long Point Road. Continue to the end.

Address: 6151 Long Point Road, Neavitt, MD



Be aware of weather, tides and wind conditions before you launch.

Recreating on the water involves risks, so safety and planning are of the utmost importance. Even if the water looks calm, conditions on waterways can change due to tides, wind and weather. Check conditions before launching. For more information call the National Weather Service at 703-996-2200 or visit www.weather.gov

For More Information

Talbot County Department of Parks and Recreation

10028 Ocean Gateway
Easton, MD 21601
phone: 410-770-8050
www.talbotparksandrec.com



Talbot County Office of Tourism

11 South Harrison Street
Easton, MD 21601
phone: 410-770-8000
e-mail: tourism@talbotcountymd.gov
www.tourtalbot.org



Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Chesapeake and Coastal Service

Public Access and Water Trails Program

580 Taylor Avenue, Suite E-2, Annapolis, MD 21401
DNR coordinates the creation of a statewide system of public water access sites and water trails and provides technical, planning and design assistance to local governments and other partners. For more information visit www.dnr.state.md.us/ccs/pawt.asp



In Case of Emergency

In case of emergency, contact the Sheriff's Department Dispatch at (410) +911 and specify that you are in Talbot County, Maryland or call the Maryland Natural Resource Police at 410-260-8888.



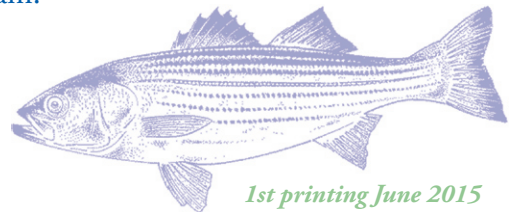
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Call toll free in Maryland, 1-877-620-8DNR ext. 8780.

TTY users call via the Maryland Relay. Accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request. Seven days advance notice is requested.



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