

## **Formation of the Friends of the John Smith Trail**

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 founded the Friends of the Capt. John Smith Chesapeake Trail.

They were seeking a way commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Jamestown and the explorations of Capt. John Smith and bring attention to the bay's history, its native people, and conservation of its ecosystems and regional culture.

The organization was originally an unincorporated coalition comprised of more than 60 organizations including government agencies at the federal, state and local level, municipalities, business and tourist groups and non-profit organizations throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The partnership quickly grew to include more than 180 groups and thousands of individuals.

Its mission: "... to celebrate the unique history and environment of the Chesapeake Bay while highlighting current efforts to restore the Chesapeake's health and creating a lasting legacy for future generations."

The Friends of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail rallied support for passage of legislation to establish the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. In December 2006 they succeeded with the enactment of Pubic Law 109-418.

In 2010, the Friends of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail merged with Friends of Chesapeake Gateways to form the Chesapeake Conservancy.