

## Chapter VI Recommendations

### A. Description of Treatment Options

Woodlands Farm and Thomas's Wharf are a small part of a much larger landscape of Eastern Shore seaside farms. The features and attributes defining this as a cultural landscape, particularly a historic vernacular landscape, are many. The U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service defines historic vernacular landscapes as,

a landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped the landscape. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family, or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday lives.<sup>1</sup>

Influenced by larger issues of settlement and community, both Woodlands Farm and Thomas's Wharf embody the physical characteristics of an organic evolution of a landscape over time. These characteristics on a large scale include spatial relationships between settlement and water, and on a more site scale include human activities and how they translated to physical changes in the landscape. Knowing the importance that Woodlands Farm and Thomas's Wharf embody as a historic vernacular landscape, a question remains: What can be done to retain the significance and integrity of the site, while providing for future activities and use?

Essential to future management of Woodlands Farm and Thomas's Wharf is continued use of the property while retaining those character defining features that make the property significant, and maintaining and potentially enhancing the level of integrity that currently exists. Determination of a philosophy for guiding future management, development, and interpretation for Woodlands Farm and Thomas's Wharf is influenced by many factors, primarily including significance, integrity, and proposed use of the property, as well as the goals and objectives of the Virginia Coast Reserve. According to standards set forth by the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service in

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Preservation Briefs 36, Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*, by Charles A. Birnbaum (Washington, DC, 1994) 2.

*Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, there are four treatment options: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.

- **Preservation** is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment.
- **Rehabilitation** is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alteration, and additions while preserving those portions of features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.
- **Restoration** is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.
- **Reconstruction** is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.<sup>2</sup>

Thorough research and analysis of a property's significance and integrity is essential. Without this information it is futile to choose a management philosophy for a site. The treatment option must be guided by the property, its history, and future uses to establish well informed recommendations.

## **B. Recommended Treatment**

The most suitable management philosophy for a historic property that allows for protection and maintenance of significant features, as well as future use and development is Rehabilitation. Rehabilitation encompasses many of the same physical interventions as

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, ed. by Charles A. Birnbaum with Christine Capella Peters (Washington, DC, 1996).

Preservation, all the while recognizing a landscape as dynamic, constantly evolving and changing over time. Specific recommended guidelines in *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* include:

- Protecting and maintaining existing site features that contribute to the property's significance and integrity.
- Repair of existing significant features.
- Replacement of significant features that contribute to the historic character of the property.
- Designing new features which respect or acknowledge the historic character of the property.

Protecting, maintaining, repairing, replacing, and designing acknowledge change in the landscape. When features are repaired or replaced and new features added, great care must be taken not to create a "false historical appearance."<sup>3</sup> All repairs and changes to the landscape must be in character with the historic fabric of the property and in accordance with the following recommendations. Current work taking place at Thomas's Wharf includes construction of a boardwalk that does not fit with the general pattern of circulation for that area of the property. Knowing that sometimes decisions must be made without all the necessary information, I hope future work will consider the information presented in this document.

Another issue is replacement of previously existing features supporting and enhancing the historic character and overall spatial characteristics of the property. This is an issue of great concern, particularly at Woodlands Farm. The recent loss of tenant houses along the Seaside Road, once visible from the south facing entrance of the house, significantly change the character of the larger landscape surrounding the farm. The relationship of the outbuildings and the house is altered due to demolition of the barn. A considerable amount of historic character and integrity is lost at Woodlands Farm because of these actions.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 53.

### **C. Recommendations**

The following recommendations address the main subjects of this study, Woodlands Farm and Thomas's Wharf. In addition, I take a closer look at the work of the Virginia Coast Reserve. Of particular impact to this study is the Seaside Farm program initiated by the Virginia Coast Reserve. In order to protect the sensitive coastal ecology and associated natural resources it is not enough to just protect the barrier islands. Lands and human activities that impact the barrier islands are part of the much larger area. Protecting seaside properties means maintaining traditional activities, such as farming, and cultural and historic properties that continue to exist. Deterioration and eventual destruction of the fragile ecosystems come about because of a change in land use and human activities. Therefore, the scope of conservation for the Virginia Coast Reserve changed from protecting a physical place to considering a much broader concept of conservation, which includes the lands and actions that impact the welfare of the natural systems. Not only are lands to be preserved, but also the culture and history that is responsible for shaping and sustaining those lands. Maintaining traditional activities, such as farming and fishing, as well as spatial relationships, such as houses to fields and fields to marsh, must occur in order to maintain and protect the delicate natural systems. Influencing proper land stewardship means opening a discussion with the local community about why we should preserve culture, history, and natural systems, and then providing viable opportunities to conserve and continue traditional lifestyles and landscapes. Education and interpretation are valuable tools to convey the significance of such cultural and vernacular landscapes as Woodlands Farm, Thomas's Wharf, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and should be used to bridge the gap between the Virginia Coast Reserve and local communities.

These recommendations are the framework for continued use and conservation of the Woodlands Farm and Thomas's Wharf, and must be used as such. Organized under the three general categories of Virginia Coast Reserve, Woodlands Farm, and Thomas's Wharf, they outline the recommended management philosophy of rehabilitation and the priority for undertaking them. Under each category are two types of recommendations, one pertaining to Cultural and Site Management Issues and the other to Interpretation.

Cultural and Site Management Issues address historic character, significance, and site integrity, while including some general maintenance recommendations. Interpretation addresses how the historic and cultural information embodied in these sites can be disseminated to residents of the Virginia Coast Reserve's Seaside Farm program, the local community, and those participating in educational and recreational activities sponsored by the Virginia Coast Reserve.

## Virginia Coast Reserve

### **Short Term Cultural and Site Management Recommendations**

1. Reuse existing building stock within the Virginia Coast Reserve's real estate holdings, in order to reduce the loss of historic built fabric, such as tenant houses.
  - Rehabilitate existing tenant houses and market as affordable housing options for local citizens.
  - Initiate and promote a homesteading program for residents to repair and reuse existing dwellings for housing.
2. Sponsor farmers market to enhance interaction between local residents and contribute to the market for locally grown and produced goods.

**Virginia Coast Reserve**

**Long Term  
Cultural and Site Management  
Recommendations**

1. Design Seaside Farm developments for a diversity of income levels. (Figure 6.1)
  - Designate a percentage or number of potential building sites for low to middle income participants.
  - Develop and offer affordable house designs, with moderate square footage which maintain the historic architectural character of Eastern Shore houses.
  - Develop building sites for smaller dwellings reminiscent of the traditional pattern of houses and structures built along the woodland edges of cultivated fields. (see Figures 4.20 and 4.21)
  
2. Promote a program to establish and support entrepreneurial farming operations that grow marketable produce as a means to maintain traditional agricultural land use patterns on the Eastern Shore. (Figure 6.1)
  - Designate areas of the Seaside Farms to be used for entrepreneurial farming operations. This may include utilizing areas on the farm that were traditionally used for agricultural practices. Any expansion of agricultural land use should follow old field patterns on the property.
  - Provide educational and technical support for entrepreneurial farming operations by sponsoring educational sessions and strengthening communications between available resource agencies and local farmers.
  - Market entrepreneurial farm program produce under the Eastern Shore Select label.

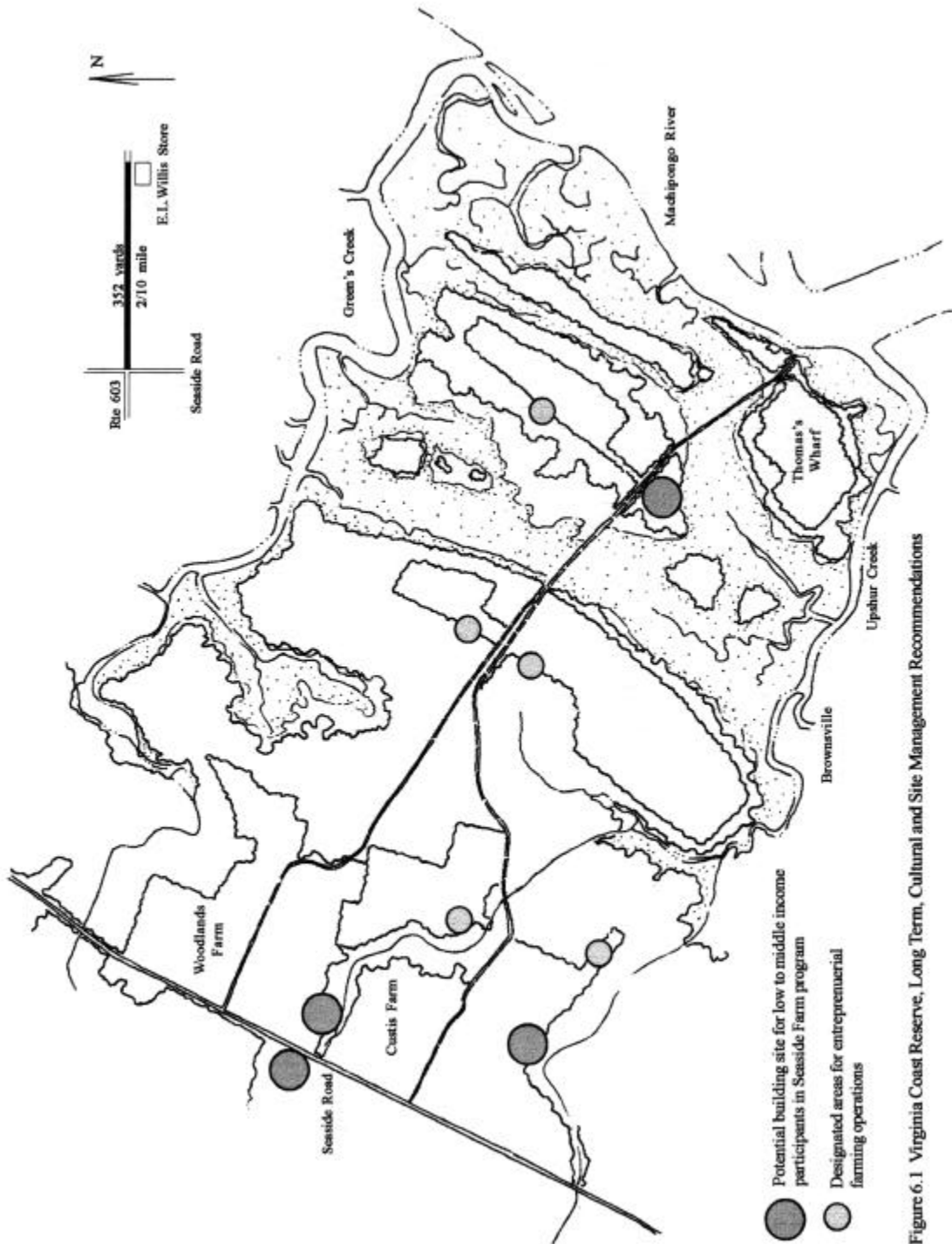


Figure 6.1 Virginia Coast Reserve, Long Term, Cultural and Site Management Recommendations



## Woodlands Farm

### Short Term Cultural and Site Management Recommendations

1. Develop maintenance schedule for preservation of features that contribute to the historic character and integrity of Woodlands Farm. (Figure 6.2)
  - Identify and monitor mature vegetation in the yard in order to develop a maintenance program that maintains and replaces that mature vegetation.
    - *Magnolia sp.* beginning at the old farm entrance off of Seaside Road, and leading up to the house.
    - Other significant vegetation including *Crapemyrtle sp.*, *Celtis occidentalis*, *Cedrus sp.* located on the north side of the house.
  - Retain and maintain the Thomas family graveyard, including vegetation, grave markers, and iron boundary fencing and gate, as a significant historic feature of Woodlands Farm and example of an early twentieth century commercially produced cemetery.
  - Stabilize and repair the schoolhouse as significant to the spatial organization of the farm and to Eastern Shore architectural history, to be used as lodging for visitors to the farm or future researchers.
  - Remove objects and debris not contributing to the significance of the farm (see Chapter 5), such as the open pole barn, currently in disrepair, and trash deposited along the woodland edge.
  - Restrict manipulation of views that would be out of character with traditional vistas, such as the clearing of woodland buffers between cultivated farmland and tidal marsh and removing mature vegetation surrounding the house and yard.
  - Discontinue unnecessary grading and compaction of the yard surrounding the house to preserve the site for future archaeological investigations.

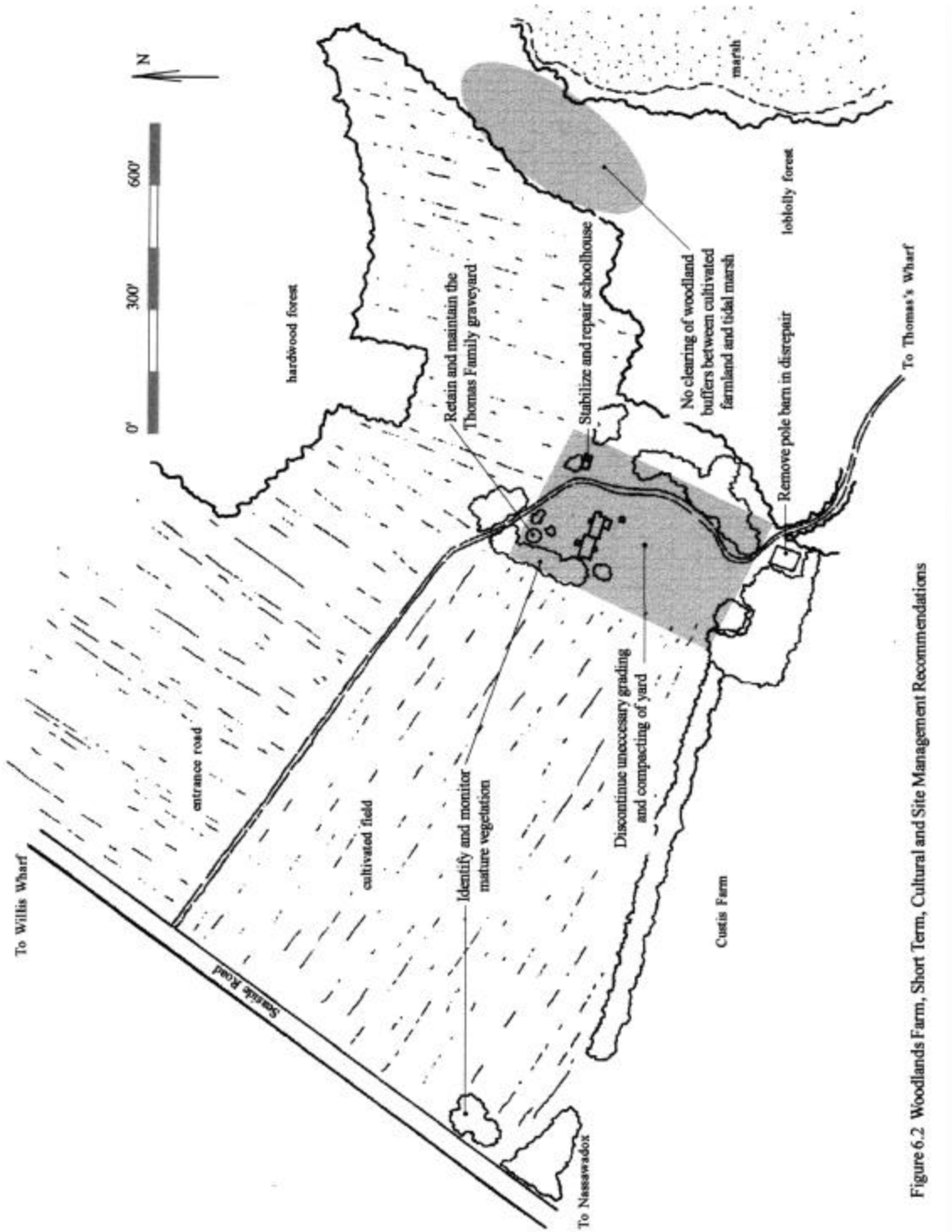


Figure 6.2 Woodlands Farm, Short Term, Cultural and Site Management Recommendations

**Woodlands Farm****Long Term  
Cultural and Site Management  
Recommendations**

1. Maintain the remaining historic character and integrity of Woodlands Farm when proposing and constructing new site features, including built structures, plant species and vegetative patterns, and views. (Figure 6.3)
  - Limit new construction of built structures to keep within the established spatial organization of the Woodlands Farm buildings. (see Figure 4.49)
  - Preserve and repair the dairy as an important outbuilding that contributes to the body of knowledge of plantation architecture and Eastern Shore history.
  - Keep new planting on the property in accordance with established patterns of field/woodland edge; maintain edges of existing woodland.
  - Undertake a detailed survey of the property to locate topographic features, including drainage ditches in old agricultural fields, and depressions near Green's Creek mill site.
  - Provide funding to carry out future archaeological work at Woodlands Farm. Site areas include:
    - schoolhouse
    - dairy
    - barn
    - depressions near Green's Creek mill site
    - brick kiln
    - Woodlands house
    - weaving shed

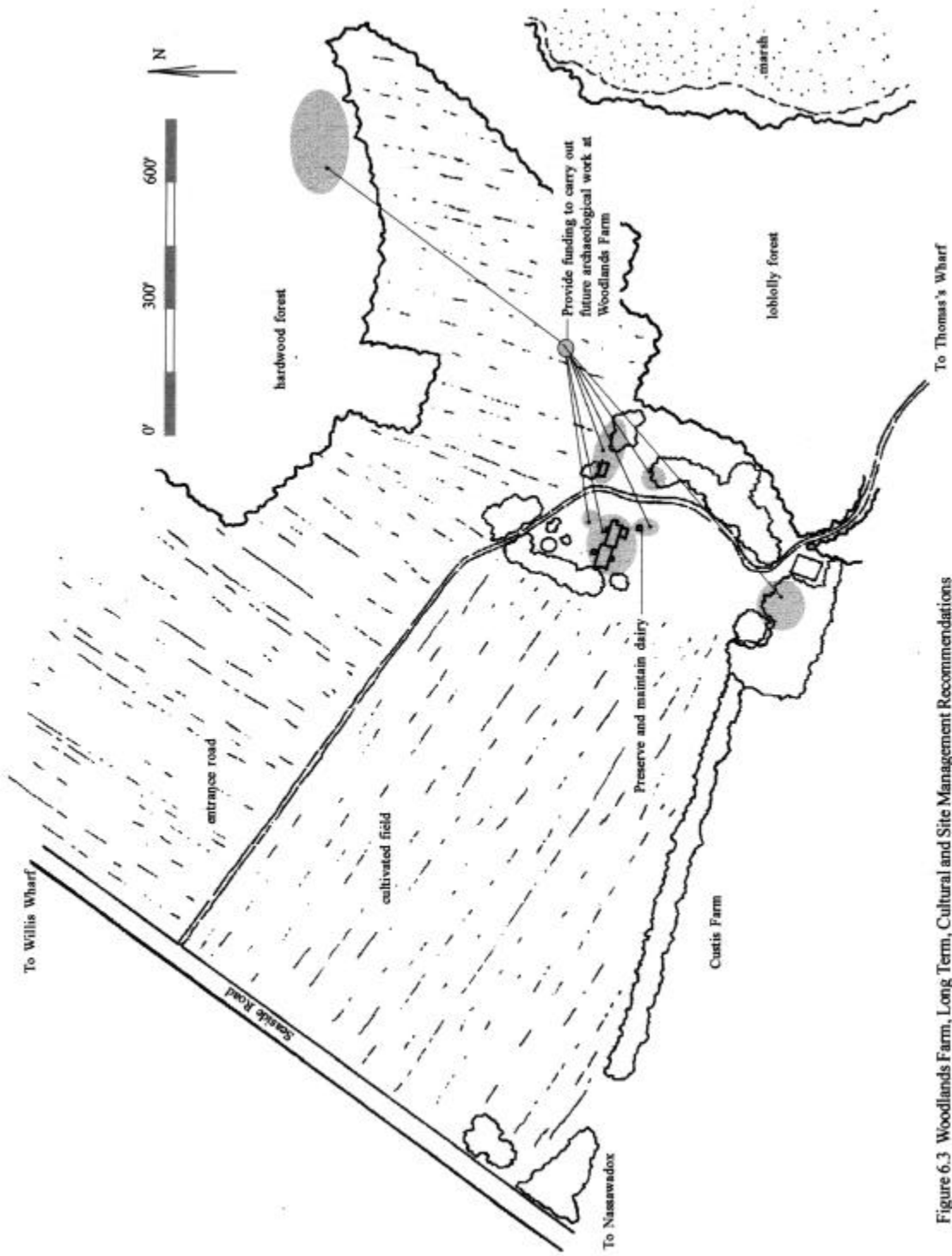


Figure 6.3 Woodlands Farm, Long Term, Cultural and Site Management Recommendations

**Thomas's Wharf****Short Term  
Cultural and Site Management  
Recommendations**

1. Develop maintenance schedule for preservation of features that contribute to the historic character and integrity of Thomas's Wharf. (Figure 6.4)
  - Remove objects not contributing to the significance of the property, such as debris that washed up during storms and high tide and other items that were previously dumped on site.
  - Preserve and protect the agricultural field at the wharf for future archaeological investigations in accordance with recommendations made by the William and Mary Center for Archaeology.
  - Construct proposed boardwalks and paths to follow established circulation patterns.
  - Ongoing removal of non-contributing debris in the marsh along the shell road to the wharf.
  - Replace and repair the physical structure of the wharves to allow for a variety of educational and recreational activities to occur, as well as to provide traditional access to the property, thus completing the historic circulation network associated with the wharf.
    - Repair existing wharf for immediate use.

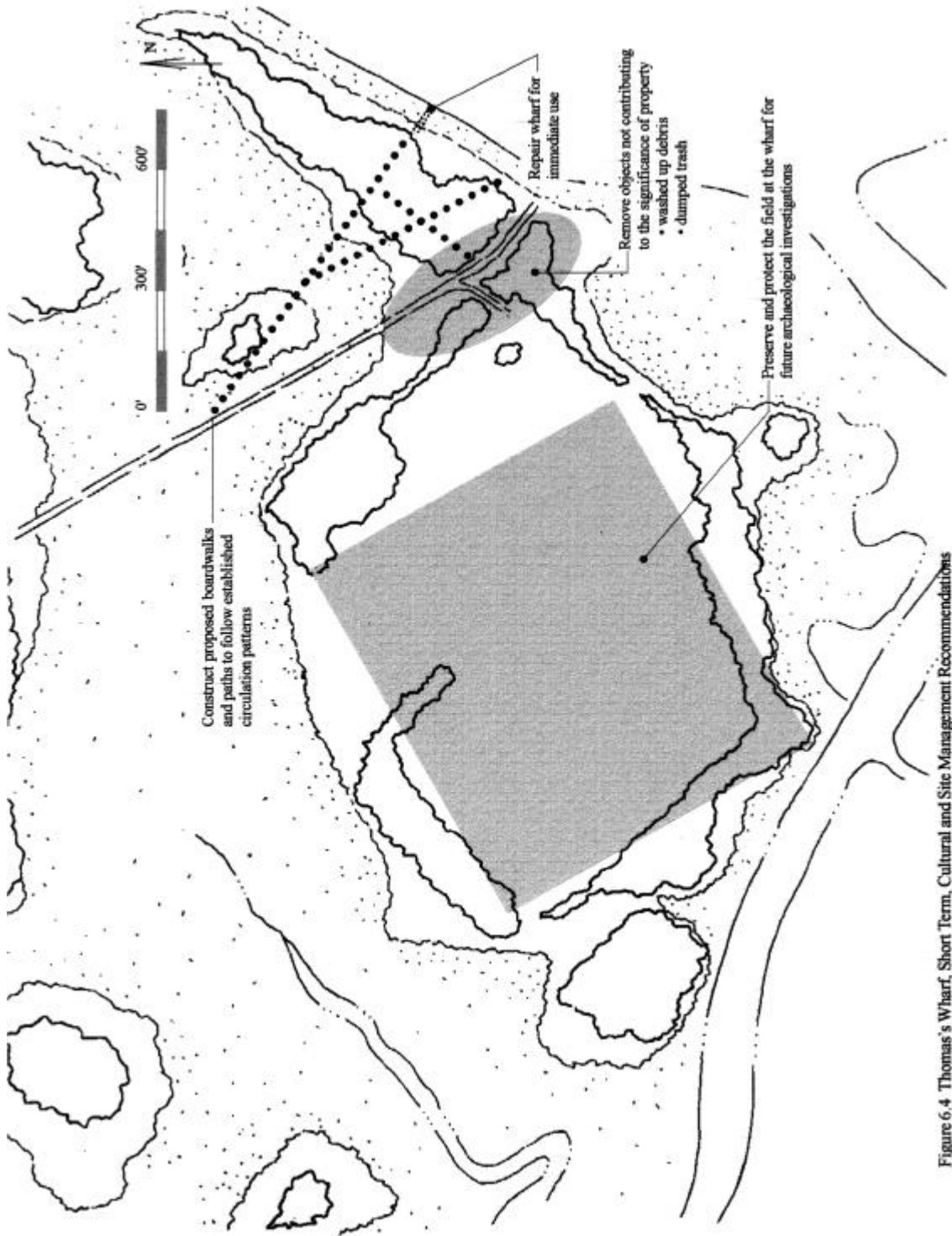


Figure 6.4 Thomas's Wharf, Short Term, Cultural and Site Management Recommendations

**Thomas's Wharf****Long Term  
Cultural and Site Management  
Recommendations**

1. Maintain the historic character and integrity of Thomas's Wharf when proposing and constructing new site features, including built structures, vegetation species and patterns, and views. (Figure 6.5)

- Provide funding for a detailed topographic and site survey of Thomas's Wharf to locate and document significant existing features.
  - Ditch banks west of the farm dwelling and field, that contribute to the history of Eastern Shore agricultural practices.
- Allow archaeological research to determine placement and size of traditional wharf site for future replacement and use.
- Completion of a structure that provides a place for interpretation and observation of the property and natural systems, and is a focal point/destination of interpretive trail.
  - Locate structure near the site of the house nearest the existing wharf, as presently identified by brick scatters, piers, steps, and concrete walk.
  - Design structure in the style of an early twentieth century Eastern Shore waterman's dwelling.
  - Provide physical access between built structure and wharf.

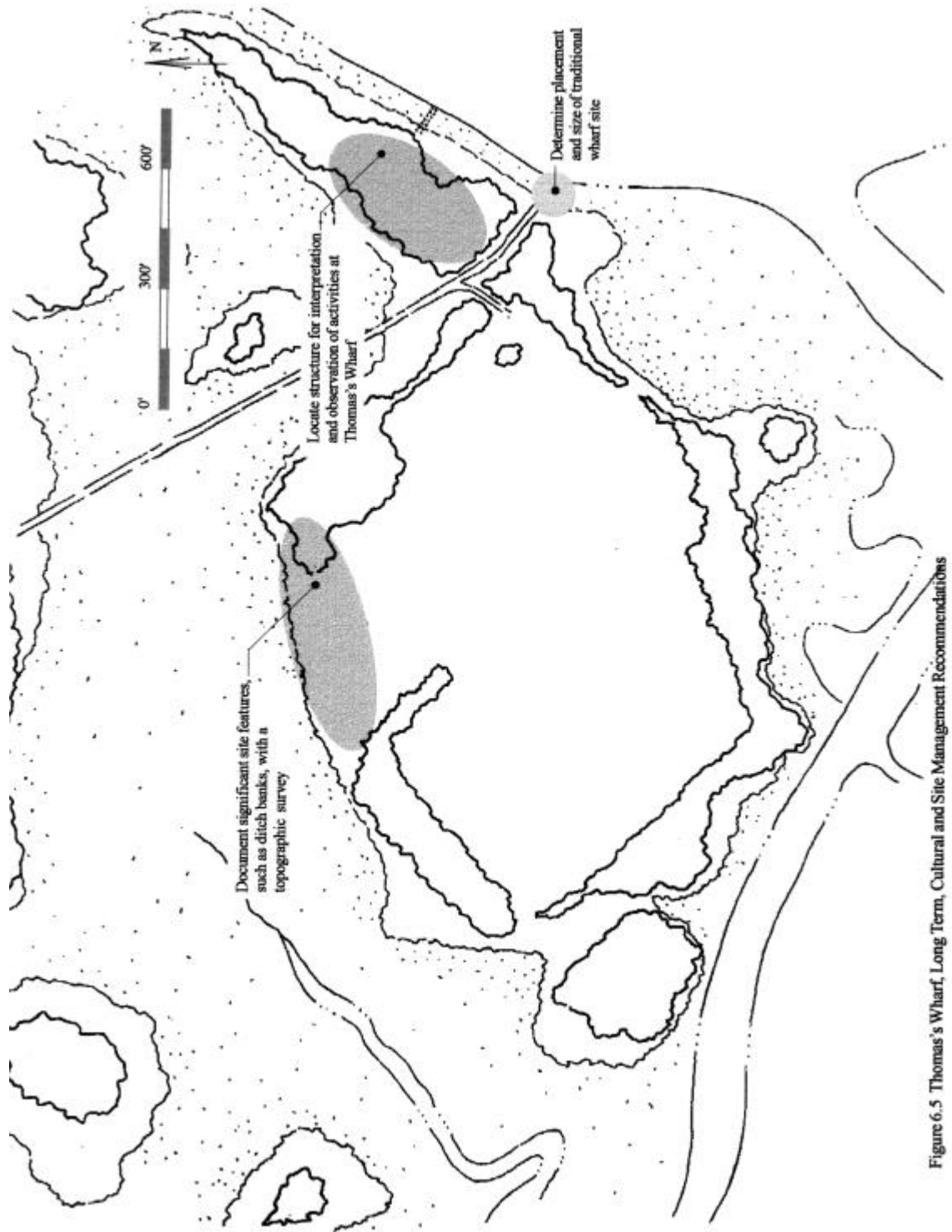


Figure 6.5 Thomas's Wharf, Long Term, Cultural and Site Management Recommendations



**Thomas's Wharf and Woodlands Farm****Short Term  
Interpretation Recommendations**

1. Create an interpretive walking trail for Thomas's Wharf and Woodlands Farm that ties into other Virginia Coast Reserve's Seaside Farm property holding. (Figure 6.6)
  - Allow interpretive trail to follow previous patterns of circulation on Woodlands Farm and at Thomas's Wharf, and to be used by pedestrians, bicyclists, and horseback riders.
    - Repair and replacement of corduroy road across the marsh to provide pedestrian access to the wharf.
  - Create a walking brochure that describes vegetation and farming patterns, natural system, and human and cultural influences on the landscape that are commonly found on the Eastern Shore.
  - Design stops along the trail where visitors may view the patterns and influences in the landscape, and also engage in a variety of activities to occur, such as resting, bird and animal watching, photography, group discussions, etc.
    - traditional hammock and agricultural produce
    - traditional waterman activities and practices
    - native vegetative communities and typical species to include: loblolly forest, hardwood forest, shrub swamp, freshwater marsh, and salt marsh
    - road remnants including corduroy road across salt marsh
    - ditch banks and other visible features of traditional agricultural practices
    - established fencerows along and in marsh to show the dynamics of change in a coastal landscape
    - typical wildlife and their habitats, such as songbirds in woodland edge, water birds in marsh, shellfish on marsh and water edge

- Create areas for interpretation at Thomas's Wharf.
  - Provide a place for viewing ongoing archaeological investigations.
  - Provide the visitor a view of the decaying early twentieth century Eastern Shore farm.
    - To enhance the visual impact of the ruins, and allow for future archaeological work, remove successive and invasive vegetation around the dwelling ruins, outbuildings, and work yard to expose decaying buildings and the spatial layout.

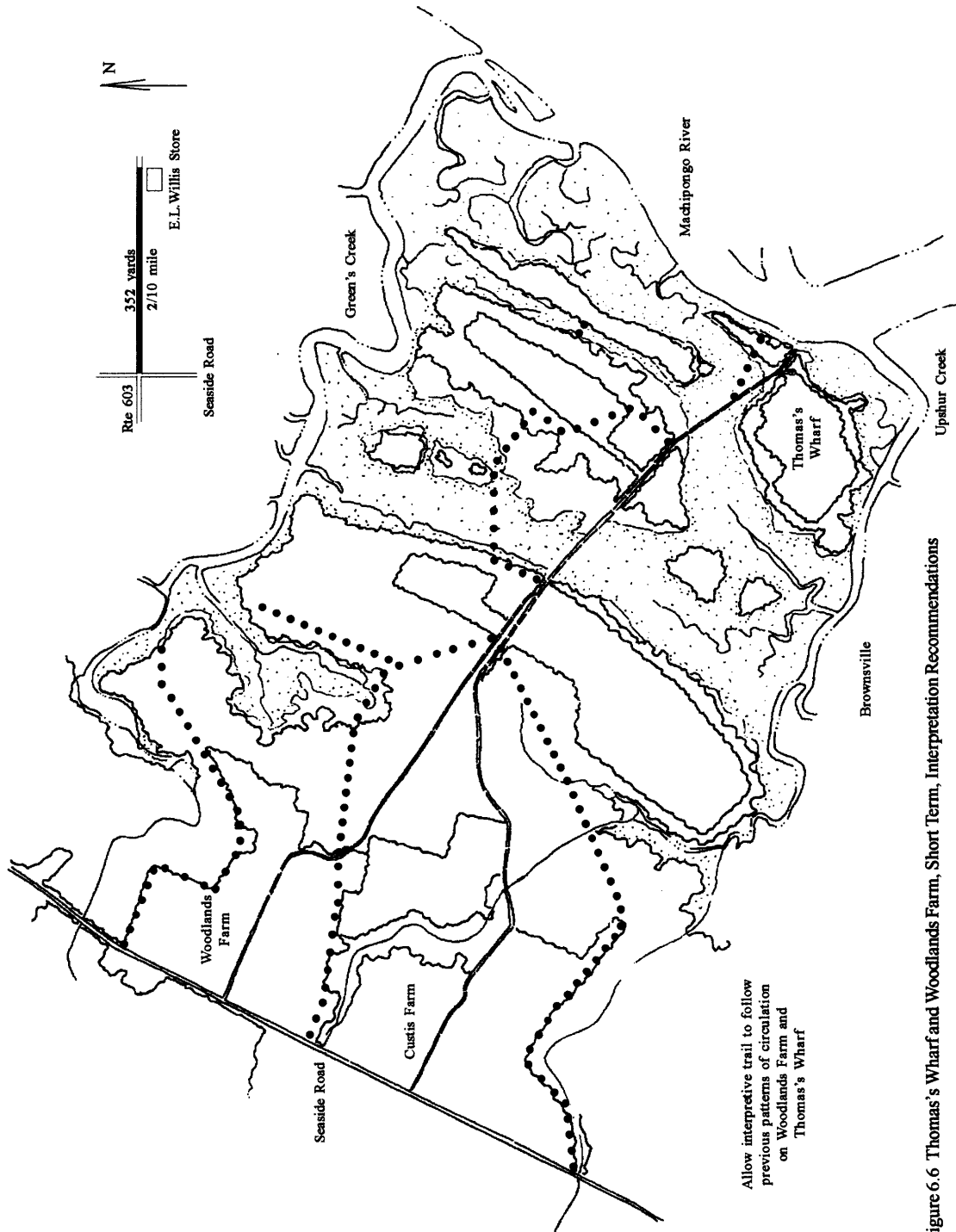


Figure 6.6 Thomas's Wharf and Woodlands Farm, Short Term, Interpretation Recommendations

**Thomas's Wharf and Woodlands Farm****Long Term  
Interpretation Recommendations**

1. Provide opportunities to share and interpret the cultural history of Thomas's Wharf and Woodlands Farm.
  - Establish a program that enlists local citizens to participate in seeking out and collecting information pertinent to the wharf
  - Support the effort of obtaining oral histories that pertain to:
    - Woodlands Farm
    - Thomas's Wharf
    - general histories of Michael, Tompkins, Wilson, Bayly, Jacob, and Thomas families
    - community traditions associated with the Eastern Shore of Virginia
    - traditional agricultural practices of the Eastern Shore of Virginia
    - traditional cultural and economic activities associated with forests (non-timber forest products) and salt marshes