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## Susquehanna added to national water trail system

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Interior Secretary Ken Salazar speaks at a May ceremony where the Susquehanna River was designated part of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. / Photo provided

Written by  
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BINGHAMTON — The Susquehanna River has been added to a 3,000-mile network of waterways and trails passing through places important to colonial and American Indian history.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar designated the Susquehanna and three other rivers as part of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail at a ceremony in Maryland in May. The move recognizes the significance of the Susquehanna, Chester, Upper Nanticoke and Upper James rivers to the history, cultural heritage and natural resources of the existing trail, according to a National Park Service statement.

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"incorporating these river segments into the national historic trail will increase public access, provide important recreation and tourism opportunities, and enrich exploration of the water routes in the entire Chesapeake watershed," Salazar said.

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The designation affects the entire 552-mile course of the main stem and West Branch of the Susquehanna in New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. It allows the park service to partner with state and local agencies, and conservation and tribal groups, on fundraising, management plans and promotional efforts along the waterways.

Trish Carothers, program director of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, a nonprofit that advocates for the watershed's natural and cultural resources, noted that the Susquehanna trail still contains landscapes evocative of the time of its exploration. She said her organization was looking forward to planning ways to improve the visitor experience, as well as river access and land conservation efforts.

"By connecting people with a resource, they become advocates, they become stewards, for the resource," she said.

From 1607-1609, Smith and his party explored and mapped the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers, and documented the American Indian communities they encountered.

At the May ceremony, Sid Jamieson, chief of the Mohawk Nation of the Haudenosaunee Nations (Six Nation/Iroquois Confederacy), called it "a wonderful day for the water that flows in the Susquehanna River.

"It is the responsibility of the Haudenosaunee Nations to care for the well-being of all things, so today's designation is very significant as it will continue to carry the story of the indigenous peoples of the past as well as all current communities along its banks."

"The New York portion of the Susquehanna connecting trail includes hundreds of miles of navigable waters and numerous public access points, allowing boaters and anglers to enjoy this natural resource, facilitating future trail improvements, and expanding tourism opportunities," New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said in a statement.

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