



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
**Office of the Governor**

Kelly Thomasson  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

November 1, 2017

TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA:

Pursuant to §2.2-401.01 of the Code of Virginia, I submit the attached report on the status of Indian tribes in Virginia for calendar year 2017.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance as you review this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly Thomasson".

Kelly Thomasson  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

The eleven state recognized Virginia Indian tribes in the Commonwealth continue to thrive. Between November 1, 2016 and October 31, 2017 no new Indian tribes were recognized by the Commonwealth; therefore, there remains 11 state recognized Indian tribes in the Commonwealth: the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Chickahominy Indian Tribe, Chickahominy Indians Eastern Division, Mattaponi Indian Tribe, Monacan Indian Nation, Nansemond Indian Tribe, Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia, Pamunkey Indian Tribe, Patawomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia, Rappahannock Tribe, and the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe.

### **Federal Affairs**

The Pamunkey Indian Tribe remains the only federally recognized tribe in the Commonwealth. They were recognized on January 28, 2016.

Six Virginia Indian tribes continue to seek federal recognition through the passage of legislation through the United States Senate and House of Representatives. Those tribes are the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, Chickahominy Indians Eastern Division, Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe, Rappahannock Tribe, Monacan Indian Nation, and Nansemond Indian Tribe.

Representative Rob Wittman sponsored – and Representatives Donald Beyer, Bobby Scott, Gerald Connolly, Scott Taylor, and Donald McEachin cosponsored – the *Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act of 2017* ([H.R.984](#)), which would extend federal recognition to the tribes listed above. Representative Wittman introduced the bill on February 7, 2017. On May 17, 2017, the House passed the bill on a voice vote. Representatives from Virginia have introduced the same bill in the legislature every session since the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Senator Tim Kaine sponsored – and Senator Mark Warner cosponsored – the *Thomasina E. Jordan Indian Tribes of Virginia Federal Recognition Act of 2017* ([S.691](#)), which is identical to Representative Wittman's bill. Senator Kaine introduced the bill on May 18, 2017. On September 13, 2017, S.691 was reported favorably from the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs without amendment and awaits action by the full Senate. United States senators from Virginia have introduced the same bill in the legislature every session since the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress.

### **State Affairs**

The Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth continues to liaise with the Virginia Indian tribes. Secretary Kelly Thomasson continues to speak regularly with the chiefs and advocate for their interests in state government.

Secretary Thomasson established a Virginia Indian advisory board, as authorized by [§ 2.2-401.01\(B\)](#). The board is tasked with establishing guidelines and a process for accepting and reviewing applications for tribal recognition by the Commonwealth. As of October 31, 2017, the board has met twice and is in the process of constructing criteria for applicants seeking state recognition.

The Mattaponi Indian Tribe, in concert with the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth and the Office of the Attorney General, continue to seek to have the state government acquire tribal land, moving it from fee land to trust land. The Mattaponi Reservation currently has 125 acres, and the additional land would add 194.88 acres. The Office of the Governor hopes to complete the acquisition before the end of Governor McAuliffe's administration in January.

The Department of Education met with Virginia Indian chiefs and their proxies on July 12, 2017. Topics of discussion at the meeting included an update on the Board of Education's reforms to Virginia's Accountability System and planned revisions to the Curriculum Framework for History and Social Science following changes to the social science Standards of Learning. The tribes again expressed frustration at their perceived lack of prominent inclusion in state frameworks and Standards of Learning.

On June 24, 2017, various Virginia Indian and state officials broke ground on Mantle, a tribute to the Virginia Indians on the Capitol Grounds. Billy Mills, an Olympic gold medalist and an Oglala Lakota member, headlined the groundbreaking.

### **State Legislative Affairs**

Two bills pertinent to the Virginia Indian tribes passed the legislature this year. Delegate Keith Hodges introduced [HB1686](#), which would amend and reenact §§ [15.2-4202](#) and [15.2-4203](#) to allow federally recognized tribes to join planning district commissions as members. The bill passed the House of Delegates and the State Senate without opposition. It was signed by Governor McAuliffe on March 13, 2017. The bill is a continued effort to adjust Virginia code to account for the Pamunkey's recent federal recognition.

Delegate Christopher Peace introduced [HB1952](#), which would amend and reenact § [2.2-1149](#) to streamline state acquisition of Virginia Indian land into trust provided that the new land is within one mile of existing reservation land. Such acquisitions would be subject to review by the Office of the Attorney General and the approval of the Governor. The bill passed the House of Delegates and the State Senate without opposition. It was signed by Governor McAuliffe on March 13, 2017. This bill was introduced and passed to streamline the aforementioned Mattaponi Reservation fee land to trust acquisition.

### **Cultural Affairs**

Seven Virginia Indian tribes celebrated their culture at eight powwows in the last year. The powwows were open to the public and offered non-tribal members a chance to learn about Virginia Indian culture firsthand. The powwows held by state recognized tribes over the last year were:

1. 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Fall Festival Corn Harvest Powwow and School Day – November 4-6, 2016
2. 25<sup>th</sup> annual Monacan Indian Nation Powwow – May 20 - 21, 2017

3. 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe Pow-Wow – May 27-28, 2017
4. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Mattaponi Indian Reservation Pow-Wow – June 17, 2017
5. 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian “Green Corn Dance” Powwow & Gathering – July 1, 2017
6. 2017 Nansemond Indian Tribe Powwow – August 19-20, 2017
7. Nottoway Indian Tribe Pow Wow – September 16-17, 2017
8. 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Chickahominy Fall Festival & Pow Wow – September 23-24, 2017

Governor McAuliffe was honored to attend the Mattaponi Indian Reservation Pow-Wow this year. His attendance at the pow-wow was the first time in tribal memory that a Governor of Virginia has attended a pow-wow on the Mattaponi Reservation. Secretary Thomasson or her proxy attended every powwow over the course of the year.

The first annual [Pocahontas Reframed: Native American Storytellers Film Festival](#) will be held from November 17-19, 2017. The film festival seeks “to foster greater awareness of and exposure to indigenous languages, cultures, and societies.” The film festival is being led by Brad Brown, Assistant Chief of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe. The film festival held a sneak peek showing of two films on February 5, 2017, for which Governor McAuliffe hosted a welcoming reception at the Mansion with the creative directors and Virginia Indian chiefs.

### **Tribal Reports**

The Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth solicited reports from the state recognized tribes this year for the annual report. Those reports from the tribes that responded are below (with format slightly edited for structural continuity).

#### **Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe**

2nd Weekend of May: Native American Revival Crusade For Christ, Guest Evangelist Dr. (Chief) Steve Silverheels, son of Jay Silverheels who played Tonto on the TV Series “The Lone Ranger”

3rd Weekend of May: Primitive Skills Gathering, 3 day event – demonstrations in Primitive/Survivor Skills, making friction fire, bows, arrows, flint knapping and hide tanning, etc.

1st Saturday of July: 21th Annual Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Green Corn Dance Powwow. Longest Runners attended – 14 different tribes. Running from California to Washington, DC protesting Substance Abuse on Tribal Reservation Lands

Smithsonian (Native American Museum) documented and published an interview with Chief Walt Red Hawk Brown of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe. Interview appeared in [Indian Country Today](#) and on their Website, Facebook page.

Appeared on Wavy TV 10, My Hampton Roads. Chief Brown and 14 Tribal Members.

Submitted short historical video documentary on the history of Cattashowrock Town to the executive director for possible use for the Pocahontas Reframed Film Festival

Gave a Native American Presentation on the history of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe to the Dominion Energy/Power Stock Holders Group in Richmond, Virginia.

The Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe's Palisade Village, Cattashowrock Town, was selected by the American Evolution Digital Trail app, as part of the Tourism initiative and legacy project of the Virginia 2019 Commemoration. The app will officially launch in the spring of 2018 and will feature a collection of significant historic and cultural sites that tell the stories of 400 years of Virginia's history.

### **Monacan Indian Nation**

The Monacan Indian Nation kicked off the UVA Bicentennial on Oct. 6, 2017. It was the tribe's first official public appearance at UVA, in front of 20,000 people. Monacan tribal council members and officers were introduced, and tribal dancers performed with a drum group.

Additionally, Charlottesville City Council designated October 9 as Indigenous Peoples' Day instead of Columbus Day, and Monacan tribal members gave press interviews about why this change is important to our history as Americans.

The Monacan 25th Annual Powwow (May 20-21, 2017) was one of the best-attended powwows in many years. The tribe is now planning for the 2018 Annual powwow and soliciting sponsors, and will be looking for property to relocate the powwow, as the current property may not be available after 2018.

The Monacan Nation still struggles with technology issues. They have a problem with internet access, as their tribal center is located in the mountains. Even the residential areas further up in the mountains have limited or no internet access. Also, cellular reception is poor.

The Monacan Nation also has issues with funding for staffing their ancestral museum. Currently it is only open by appointment and staffed by Tribal volunteers.

In the current climate, which is racially charged due to the events in Charlottesville, the Monacan Nation would like to see more support for the Virginia Indians in education.

The Monacan Nation and St. Paul's Episcopal Church had their joint Homecoming on October 7, 2017. During that time, the Nation holds an auction to raise funds for scholarships for qualified Monacan Tribal members for tuition and book reimbursement.

The tribe participated in the Amherst County Apple Festival on October 21-22. They handed out information on the museum and the upcoming powwow, with snacks and small items to thank the community for their support. They had a traveling display to discuss their history.

We will be participating in Amherst County Days at Sweet Briar on October 28, passing out information on museum and the upcoming powwow, and answering questions from the public about tribal history.

### **Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia**

In 2017, the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia focused on four priorities, cultural development, environmental concerns, community engagement and civic involvement.

Cultural development – The monthly workshops at the Tribe’s Community House offers instruction for the preservation of indigenous art forms.

Environmental Concerns – The Tribe’s yearly Clean River Day activity focuses on a portion of the Nottoway River area that adjoins the original Nottoway Indian Reservation land.

Community Engagement – The 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday’s Artisan Market, on the grounds of the Nottoway Tribe’s Community and Interpretive Center, is a venue for local artisans and craftsmen to showcase and sell their creations. The Artisan Market is open the first Saturday May through December.

Civic Involvement – The Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia is committed to broader civic involvement as demonstrated by the appointments and service of the following citizens on Boards, Commissions and Councils: Sid Turner, Virginia Indian Commemorative Commission; Dr. Sheila Elliott, Virginia Pharmacy Board; Dr. Denise Walters, Virginia Science Museum Board; Elizabeth Roach, Environmental Justice Advisory Council; and Chief Lynette Allston, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Board and Chairmanship of the Virginia Indian Advisory Board.

### **Pamunkey Indian Tribe**

The Pamunkey Indian Tribe continues to move forward building our governmental infrastructure and capacity.

We are working a grant with the College of William & Mary for an archaeological survey of our shorelines. We are working a grant with the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences related to severe shoreline erosion. We have worked with Virginia Tech Extension Services for a grant that VT is managing to fund an extension agent for the reservation. That agent started last week with an office within the Tribal Administration building.

## **Patawomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia**

January 26 - February 2: Virginia State Archeologist and members of the Patawomeck Tribal Council participated in an archeological dig on the Eliot Fendig property, known to be a site of one of the Patawomeck villages on the Potomac. This village is listed on John Smith's 1608 map of the Chesapeake. The name of the village was Qouiough.

March 15-17: Education Symposium at Virginia Tech

April 27: Earth Day Camp at A. P. Hill with over 2,000 students in attendance

June 26-30: Fredericksburg Area Museums History Camp. A yearly History Camp set up for students to visit each local museum and participate in learning history, culture, and crafts of early colonists.

July 4: Large Patawomeck village at Ferry Farms (Washington's boyhood home). We do this each year for July 4 celebration.

August 5: Village set up at Central Rappahannock Regional Library, Fredericksburg Branch

August 21: Special Eclipse Program. Master Patawomeck Storyteller John (Johnny Mac) Chinn wrote a story specifically for the Eclipse of 2017.

September 9: Caledon State Park Village for Children Program. We also talked with park rangers.

September 23: Second Annual FREE Patawomeck Flu Clinic

September 30: Annual New Hope Fall Festival Village

October 8: Annual Patawomeck Village

October 21: Patawomeck Tribe participated in the American Heritage Girls (like Girl Scouts) Fall Camporee. We taught our history, culture and crafts to about 450 girls. We also had a Tribal member playing the flute for the campers.

November 4: Village at Central Rappahannock Regional Library Salem Church Branch

November 11: 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Patawomeck Craft Show (all handmade crafts)

The Patawomeck Tribe visits approximately 30-40 public and private schools a year, seeing over 6,000 students each year. We also visited Nursing Homes and Retirement Communities and were very well received. Lots of questions from inquiring minds.

## **Rappahannock Tribe**

In April, the Tribe partnered with the Richmond Ballets' Minds in Motion Program to teach Rappahannock Tribal stories to Richmond public school children through the premier of "Return to the River" performance at the Dominion Arts Center.

Through a partnership with Chesapeake Conservancy, in June, the Rappahannocks were donated land on the Rappahannock River to launch their Return to the River Project. This Project seeks to re-introduce traditional tribal life ways and culture of the River to the next generation of tribal youth. The land is located at the historic place that Captain John Smith met the Rappahannocks as he mapped their River.

In July the Tribe applied through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to the National Park Service to receive designation on their National Registry of Historic Places to preserve the "Farm" at Indian Neck, Virginia. It was the home of three chiefs and the school for the Tribe.

We have also held a couple of educational public events at a national and state park this year.