



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Historic St. Mary's City Executive Director Dr. John Seidel to Step Down August 1

July 24, 2025

St. Mary's City, MD — Historic St. Mary's City (HSMC) today announced that Executive Director Dr. John Seidel will step down from his role effective August 1, 2025, due to family medical issues.

"This is not a decision I ever wanted to make," said Dr. Seidel. "But family and health must sometimes come first. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve this extraordinary institution and to work alongside such dedicated staff, Commissioners, and supporters."

Since taking the helm in 2023, Dr. Seidel has led HSMC through a period of revitalization and forward momentum. Under his leadership, the museum expanded its community partnerships, secured vital funding, and laid strong foundations for future growth — all as it prepares for the 400th anniversary of Maryland's founding in 2034.

Dr. Travis Parno, HSMC's Director of Research and Collections, will assume the role of Interim Executive Director while a national search is conducted. Dr. Parno previously served in this capacity and brings years of leadership and institutional experience.

"John has been an outstanding steward of Historic St. Mary's City," said Tim Heely, Chair of the Historic St. Mary's City Commission. "His steady hand, vision, and integrity have made a lasting impact, and he leaves with the full support and appreciation of the Commissioners. We respect his decision and thank him deeply for his service."

Though stepping down, Dr. Seidel expressed his intention to remain engaged with the museum's mission. "I'll continue to support HSMC however I can — in fundraising, advocacy, or just as someone who cares deeply about its future," he said. "This is a special place, and I know it's in good hands."

ABOUT HISTORIC ST. MARY'S CITY

Historic St. Mary's City is located on the St. Mary's River, in a beautiful tidewater landscape of water, rolling hills, farmland, and forest. The 835-acre living history and archaeology museum is on the site of Maryland's first capital (1634-1695). Our team is fortunate to build upon decades of cutting-edge research, with recreated structures in the historic town center, a Woodland Indian hamlet, a tall ship, and a tobacco plantation staffed by costumed or uniformed interpreters who help visitors understand the stories of Maryland's history. Ongoing archaeological excavations continue to reveal new information about life in the past, and a new visitors center, the Maryland Heritage Interpretive Center, will come online in 2026. Since its inception, the department has identified more than 300 archaeological sites within the St. Mary's City National Historic Landmark (NHL) and curates more than 6.5 million artifacts representing millennia of human history.

The museum is one of Southern Maryland's leading tourism attractions and hosts an active school tour program. Its collections are a resource for professional archaeologists, scholars, and college students. The HSMCC Field School in Historical Archaeology, one of the longest running field schools in the nation, attracts students from all over the United States, as well as from other countries. The museum is overseen by the Historic St. Mary's City Commission (HSMCC), which is an independent agency of the State of Maryland, under the Office of the Governor.

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