Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

**Media Contact:** Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov
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**GLOUCESTER, Va. -** U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke hosted an event today with Tribal leaders celebrating Virginia's seven federally recognized tribes at Werowocomoco on the York River in Gloucester County. This site is believed to have been a place of leadership and spiritual importance to American Indians as early as circa AD 1200 and the 1607 meeting place of Powhatan and Captain John Smith, the leader of many Algonquian tribes.

At the center of the celebration were leaders of the seven tribes who recently received federal recognition: Chief Stephen Adkins of the Chickahominy; Chief Gerald Stewart of the Chickahominy, Eastern Division; Chief Dean Branham of the Monacan; Chief Lee Lockamy of the Nansemond ; Chief Robert Gray of the Pamunkey; Chief G. Anne Richardson of the Rappahannock; and Chief W. Frank Adams of the Upper Mattaponi.

"The perseverance of these Tribes to gain what they and their creator have always known is incredible," said Secretary Zinke. "As the champion of the sovereign nations, it was an honor to share this historic day with everyone. I welcome these tribes into the Federal family with open arms."

Also participating were Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs John Tahsuda, Acting National Park Service Director P. Daniel Smith, representatives of the Virginia Governor's and U.S. Senate offices, and many other dignitaries.

Six of the seven tribes received federal recognition in 2017 legislation signed into law by President Donald Trump on January 29, 2018, while the Pamunkey - the tribe of Pocahontas - received recognition in 2016.

In 2016, The Conservation Fund, a not-for profit 501(c)3 national conservation organization, purchased 264 acres of land in Gloucester County, Virginia, encompassing the historic site known as Werowocomoco. The Conservation Fund then sold the property to the National Park Service to ensure its permanent protection.

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