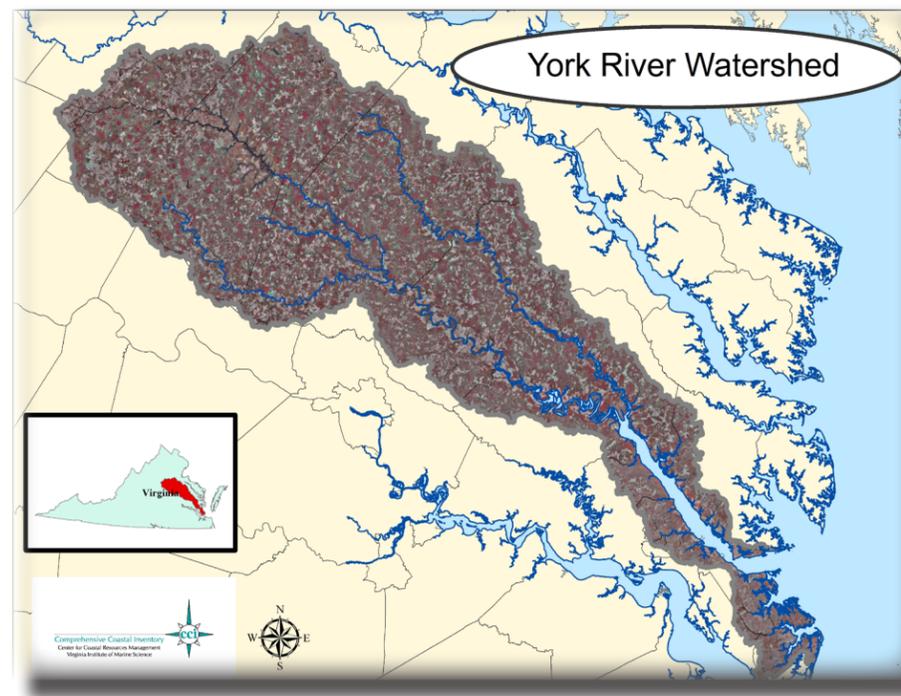


The York River

Native North Americans called the York River *Pamunkee*, combining two words meaning *upland* and *sloping* to describe its high banks. English colonists renamed the river Charles, in 1634, and later York, in 1643.

The river's watershed area drains from the Piedmont Region and courses through Virginia's heartland, covering about 2,700 square miles.



Two upstream branches, the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers, converge at West Point. The main stem of the York flows southeast from there for about 25 miles to Yorktown and then continues for 7 to 8 miles to join the Chesapeake Bay. The York River below West Point has an average width of two miles and average depth of 20 feet. The channel is 80 feet deep beneath the George P. Coleman Bridge, which is 90 feet above the river at its highest point.

Map courtesy of Center for Coastal Resources Management, Virginia Institute of Marine Science.



Photo of bridge linking York and Gloucester Counties. Courtesy of York County.

