

Fall Line



**Captain John Smith
Chesapeake National
Historic Trail**



Fall Line

A fall line is a geological feature where higher elevation land drops down towards the ocean. This sudden change in elevation sometimes creates waterfalls or rapids along rivers. The James River's fall line in Richmond, Virginia is near where the leader Powhatan was born sometime in the late 1500s. During his 1608 voyages, John Smith explored many rivers, including the James River. Smith and his crew had to go on foot to travel beyond the fall lines because the rivers became too shallow and rocky for their boat to pass.