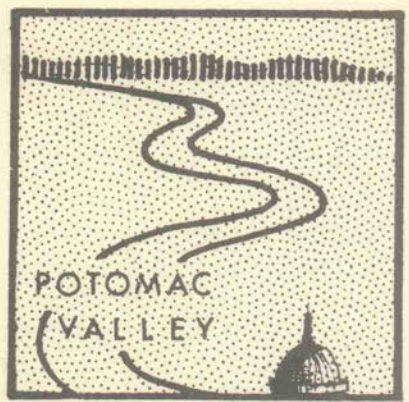


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POTOMAC  
HERITAGE  
TRAIL. . .

□ □ □ Δ PROPOSED TRUNK IN A  
NATIONWIDE SYSTEM OF TRAILS

A Proposal

POTOMAC HERITAGE TRAIL

A Trunk Trail in  
The Nationwide  
System of Trails

NOT FOR RELEASE

Prepared by

National Capital Region  
National Park Service  
United States Department of the Interior

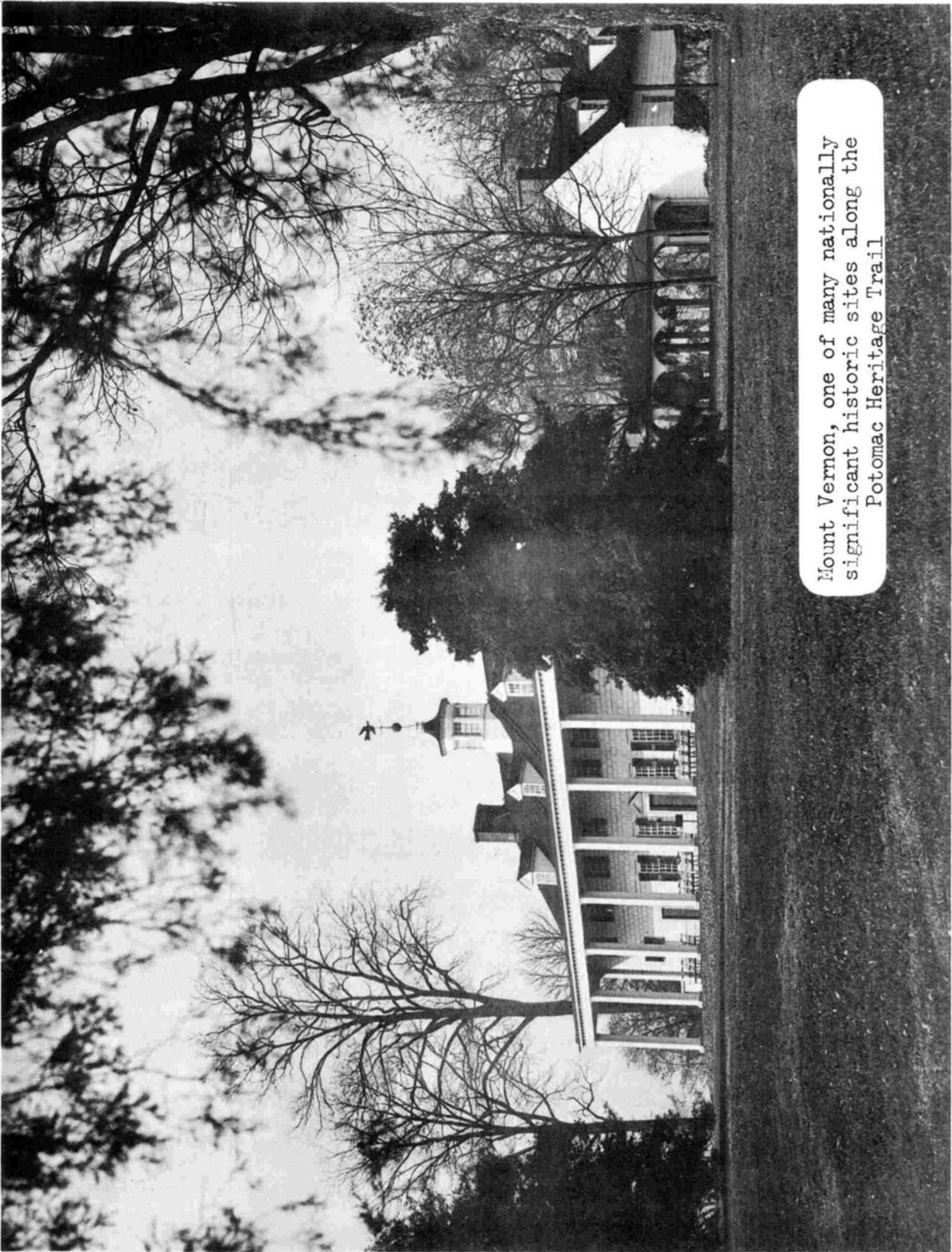
for

The Steering Committee  
Nationwide Trails Study

October 1965

Washington, D. C.





Mount Vernon, one of many nationally significant historic sites along the Potomac Heritage Trail

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
GENERAL PURPOSES AND RECREATION VALUES . . . . .	4
The Estuary . . . . .	4
Washington Metropolitan Area . . . . .	6
C & O Canal . . . . .	8
The Piedmont . . . . .	10
The Great Valley . . . . .	10
Appalachian Highlands . . . . .	11
LOCATION AND ROUTING . . . . .	14
Estuary . . . . .	14
Washington Metropolitan Area . . . . .	15
The Piedmont . . . . .	18
The Great Valley . . . . .	18
Northwest Prong . . . . .	19
Southwest Prong . . . . .	19
LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE . . . . .	21
Maryland . . . . .	21
Virginia . . . . .	23
West Virginia . . . . .	24
Pennsylvania . . . . .	24
METHOD OF CONTROL . . . . .	25
CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS . . . . .	27
USES . . . . .	31

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
FEEDER AND ACCESS TRAILS . . . . .	35
ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY . . . . .	42
COSTS . . . . .	45
FINANCING . . . . .	46
EFFECTS ON PRESENT USES . . . . .	48
SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM, POTOMAC HERITAGE TRAIL . . . . .	50
USE AND MILEAGE DIAGRAM, POTOMAC HERITAGE TRAIL . . . . .	51
MAPS . . . . .	52
PERSONS CONTACTED . . . . .	54

## INTRODUCTION

Trails are normally associated with a single landscape type-- mountain, lake shore, or river course. Few traverse more than a single physiographic region. Practically all are connected with a singular strong landscape feature such as mountain range, river valley, or historic pathway. Thus, few trailways offer a diverse recreation, scenic, cultural opportunity.

Yet, just such an opportunity exists with our Nation's Capital as its heart, the Potomac River as its backbone, and an outstanding array of scenic, scientific, cultural, historic, and recreation resources as its appendages.

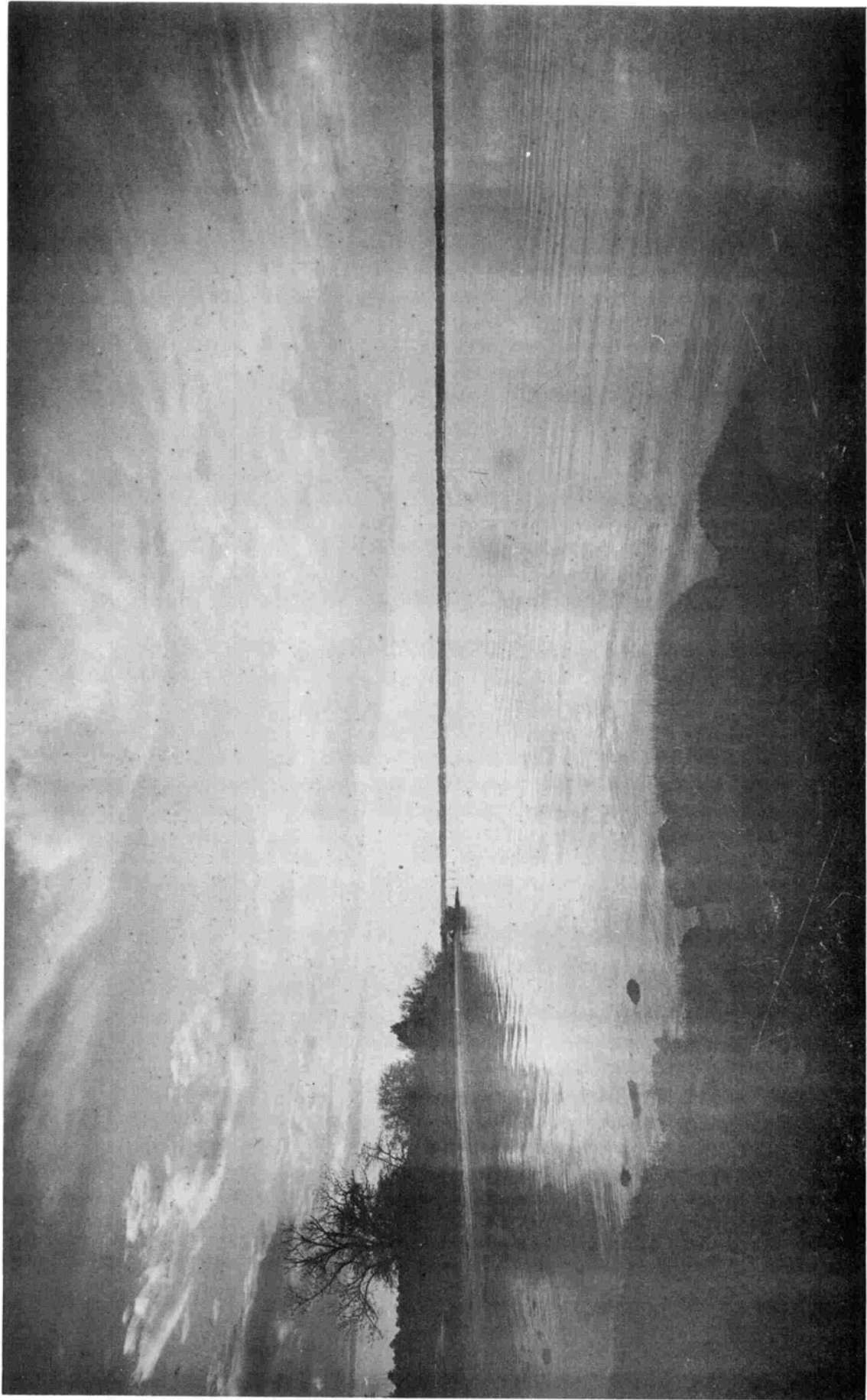
Such a trail, which might appropriately be called the Potomac Heritage Trail, could follow the course of the Potomac River and trace the historic annals of our country while offering an outstanding recreation opportunity for the residents of the Potomac Valley and its millions of annual visitors. In combination with the Appalachian Trail this facility would form the spine for an extensive Potomac Regional Trail System, embracing a variety of trunk, feeder, loop and access trails.

The trail would have as one terminus the very birthplace of the Potomac River--the high country around Spruce Knob and Canaan Valley in West Virginia. Just as the river descends through mountainous country,

winds torturously through the Great Valley, courses serenely across the Piedmont, and finally empties into its broad estuary, so the trail could follow the Potomac's waters from source to destination. Another western terminus might be the high scenic lands of southwestern Pennsylvania.

This great trail system then would uniquely offer a diverse recreation and scenic opportunity ranging from the high, alpine-like appearance of the "Potomac Highlands" to the low, coast-like character of the Potomac's mouth on Chesapeake Bay. Its elevational difference between terminal points, 4860-foot Spruce Knob to sea level, is but one indication of the changing scenes along the Potomac Heritage Trail. Varying topography, geology, climate, and soil conditions provide a wide spectrum of landscapes, forest types, wildlife, and cultural features.

Perhaps no other river in the country is as historically rich as this stream. Our very nation grew up and reached its maturity in the Potomac Valley. Our Nation's Capital, potentially the greatest source of visitation to this trail, is the focal point of the entire system. Many famous Americans were born, reared, and lived on the banks of the Potomac--Washington, Lee, Monroe, Mason, and others.



Broad waters of the Potomac's quiet,  
scenic estuary



## GENERAL PURPOSES AND RECREATION VALUES

### The Estuary

The Maryland shore of the Potomac estuary boasts a fine collection of historic, recreation, and scenic areas. At the mouth of the river is Point Lookout, once the site of a Civil War prisoner-of-war camp, now a state park, in an almost island-like environment. The narrow point is surrounded on three sides by waters of Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River. Near Point Lookout is St. Mary's City, Maryland's first capital, boasting a fine collection of old buildings. Here, too, is St. Inigoes Neck, a major potential recreation and fish and wildlife area.

Farther on, is the route of John Wilkes Booth's flight after his assassination of President Lincoln. In the area, too, is Cedarville State Park, a popular camping, picnicking, and hiking area. The park is at the headwaters of Zekiah Swamp, a great natural area, Piscataway Creek and Mattawoman Creek. All three of these stream valley areas have been proposed as regional or state parks and would provide excellent green space corridors for the trail.

On the north side of Piscataway Creek is Fort Washington, one of the historic fortifications designed to protect Washington from naval attack. Piscataway Park, an authorized addition to National Capital Parks, overlooks Mt. Vernon from the south side of Piscataway Creek and is an important archeological area.

The Virginia shore of the Potomac estuary is equal in scenic, recreational and historic opportunity. Smith Point is another coastal resource and a noted bird observation area. Farther upstream are outstanding potential recreation resources around Hack, Cod, and Nomini Creeks. Nomini Cliffs adjoins majestic Stratford Plantation, home of generations of the Lee family of Virginia.

West of Stratford Hall is Westmoreland State Park, the only major existing public recreation area on the Potomac estuary. This popular area has facilities for swimming, boating, camping, and picnicking, which are annually enjoyed by thousands of visitors.

Farther on is George Washington Birthplace National Monument, site of our first President's first home. Wakefield Manor overlooks Popes Creek, a popular local waterfowl hunting area. Annually, thousands of duck and geese rest and feed in this and other shallow, brackish embayments offering recreation opportunity for both the hunter and the bird watcher.

Near Colonial Beach is Monrovia, the site of James Monroe's birthplace, and to the west is Fredericksburg, including four major Civil War battlefields, the law office of James Monroe, architecturally notable Kenmore House, and the home of George Washington's mother.

On the Potomac in this region are Aquia Creek, Widewater, Marlborough Point, and other areas of immense recreation opportunity along this fresh-water portion of the Potomac estuary.

Quantico, the giant U. S. Marine Corps installation, and Fort Belvoir, the U. S. Army Engineer Center, are also in this area, and the trail might traverse safe, non-classified military installations of immense interest to trail users, particularly youngsters. For example, the trail might parallel a Marine obstacle course or it might actually utilize an Army floating bridge to cross an arm of Pohick Bay.

On the opposite shore is Maryland Point, another enormous potential recreation area offering abundant opportunity for hunting, swimming, boating, fishing, water skiing, picnicking and camping. Indeed, the entire Potomac estuary with its adjacent shorelands is a vast fish and wildlife resource, offering abundant variety of hunting, fishing and wildlife study.

#### Washington Metropolitan Area

Mason Neck, a giant, undeveloped protuberance into the Potomac estuary, has long been identified as the largest, most significant recreation-open space opportunity remaining in the Washington Metropolitan Area. Here is located historic Gunston Hall, once the home of George Mason. Bald eagles make their home here close to our Nation's Capital.

Pohick Church, Woodlawn, Washington's Grist Mill, and Mount Vernon are important historic features above Fort Belvoir. George Washington Memorial Parkway and Fort Hunt offer additional scenic and recreation interest. Charming, historic Alexandria is best seen by walking or cycling.

The historic, cultural, and recreation opportunities of our



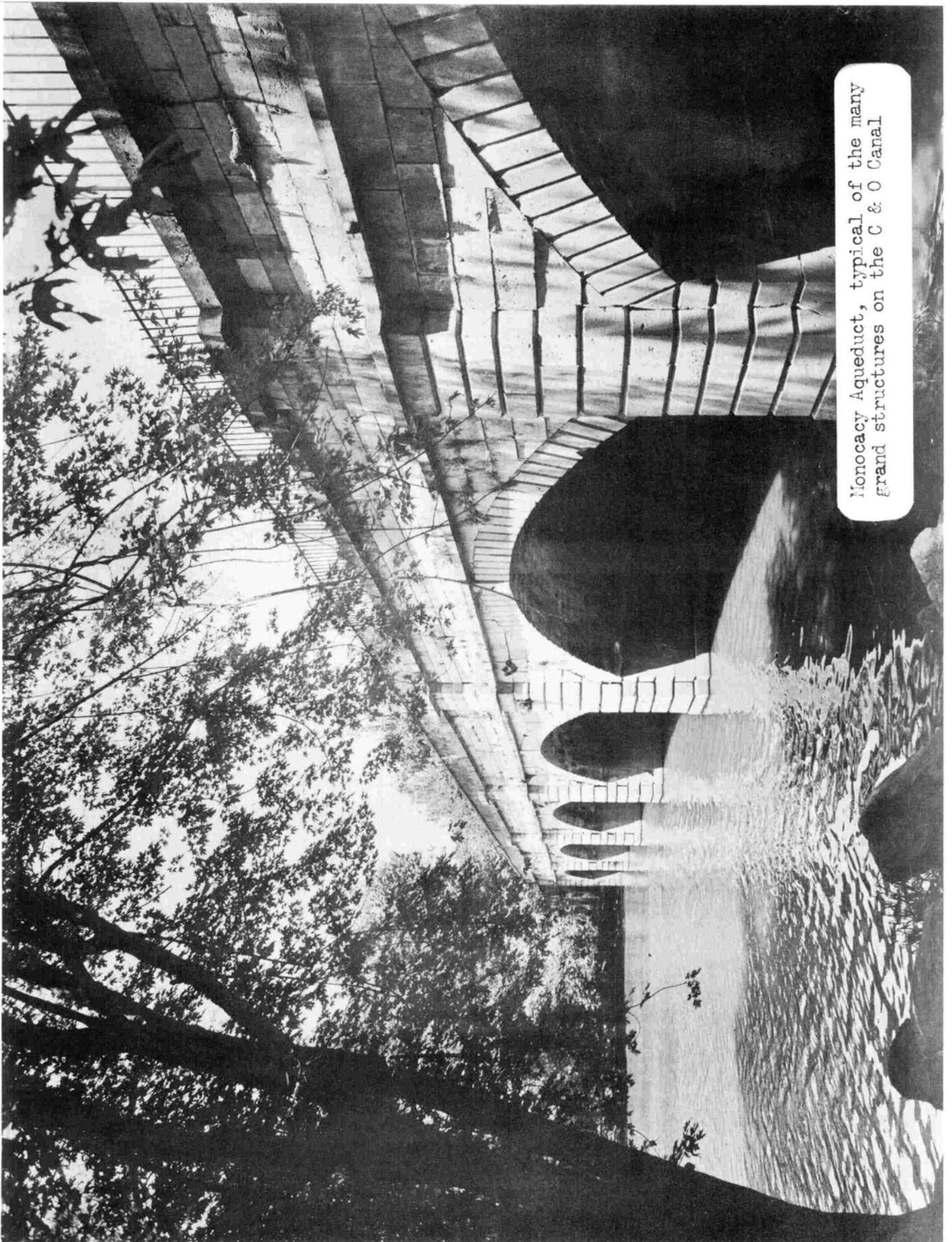
Recreation use of a rewatered section  
of the C & O Canal

Nation's Capital are well known and it is not necessary to repeat them here. Suffice it to say that many of the primary attractions would be easily accessible from this trail system. The Potomac itself is a great recreation and scenic resource in Metropolitan Washington, and action is under way to alleviate its pollution problems.

#### C & O Canal

It seems appropriate that special mention be made of the significance of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. This was one of several grand waterways designed to connect the Atlantic Seaboard with the Ohio and was actually completed as far west as Cumberland, Maryland. It functioned for over a century, although its vitality was sapped by railroads. Unlike its counterparts, it is in a remarkable state of preservation with locks, aqueducts, dams, and other features of continuing interest to the towpath traveler. Rewatered sections are particularly enjoyable. It is a memorable experience to travel such an unbroken trail where few major intrusions and road crossings are encountered.

The historical significance of the C & O Canal is well known and appreciated. Its recreation, scenic, and natural values, while lesser known, are at least equal. Its location along the river leads to a profusion of wildlife, scenic views, and recreational opportunities. There is abundant opportunity for a whole variety of activities associated with natural environment areas.



Monocacy Aqueduct, typical of the many grand structures on the C & O Canal



### The Piedmont

West from Washington the C & O Canal follows the Maryland shore. On the opposite side, in Virginia, is additional recreation opportunity, particularly in conjunction with a proposed parkway along that shoreline.

Points of interest on this leg to Harpers Ferry include Great Falls, Point of Rocks, and Balls Bluff Battlefield. Recreation opportunities are found at Great Falls, along the Canal, along the George Washington Memorial Parkway on both banks, and slack water recreation opportunity is found at Seneca. Riverbend, Blockhouse Point, Nolands Ferry, Short Hill, and Catoclin Mountain are additional potential recreation areas.

Many proclaim this section of the Potomac River as the most scenic of its entire course, for here the river presents a variety of shoreline and water conditions--steep vertical slopes, flat pastoral shorelands, placid waters, foaming white water, and interesting islands.

### The Great Valley

At the scenic confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers, the National Park Service is restoring much of the old town of Harpers Ferry to its pre-Civil War condition. Here, too, is the logical crossing point of the Potomac Heritage Trail and the Appalachian Trail, another major trunk in the Nationwide System of Trails.

Harpers Ferry may, in addition, be a junction point of parkways, one coming west from Washington, another north from Shenandoah

National Park, a third south from Gettysburg, and a fourth east from the mountainous country of West Virginia. Thus, Harpers Ferry is "targeted" as one of our Nation's most interesting, most intensively used recreation, scenic, leisure spots, featuring hostels, comfortable old hotels and a historic town atmosphere.

Harpers Ferry is also the junction of two canoeing streams, the Potomac River from the West and the Shenandoah River from the South, and is the site of the famous "Staircase," a favorite, natural slalom run for canoes.

West of Harpers Ferry are quaint, historic Shepherdstown, and Forts Frederick and Tonoloway, both frontier forts preserved by Maryland.

#### Appalachian Highlands

The scenic Paw Paw Bends of the Potomac River, including the fascinating Paw Paw Canal Tunnel, is a major opportunity for development of a large recreation area associated with the river, trail and nearby parkways.

At the western end of the C & O Canal, the Potomac Trail could lead into two regions--southwest into the "Potomac Highlands" and northwest toward the high country of southwest Pennsylvania.

The Southwest Corridor would have a variety of stream-side locations and would include the scenic "Trough." Further on, in the Monongahela National Forest, it would traverse outstanding Smoke Hole Gorge, and would bisect impressive Seneca Rocks on the way to Spruce Knob. Authorized Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation

Area incorporates much of this country. The South Branch River through here is a regionally important fishing stream. High, continuous ridges offer outstanding views and trail access into other significant areas, including Canaan Valley, Blackwater Falls State Park, and the "tundra" country called "Dolly Sods." Close by are two beautiful Stony River reservoirs, both privately owned but offering a tremendous slack-water recreation opportunity in mountainous, scenic country.

Northwest are recreation resources at Savage, Deep Creek, and Youghiogheny Reservoirs. State recreation areas are found at Big Run and New Germany in Maryland's vast Savage River State Forest. Below Youghiogheny Reservoir is a scenic gorge favored by expert canoeists and now being acquired as part of Pennsylvania's proposed Ohiopyle State Park. Four Pennsylvania state parks--Laurel Hill, Kooser, Linn Run, and Laurel Mountain--are found in Forbes State Forest which extends north from the Youghiogheny along Laurel Hill toward Johnstown. Another Pennsylvania proposal--the Laurel Ridge Connector Park--would join these and provide a continuous strip of public lands from Ohiopyle State Park to Johnstown.

Thus, the Potomac Heritage Trail would link an astounding array of the Nation's finest historic, recreation, scenic, natural, and cultural values in a continuous, meaningful open space corridor. It would be closely united with other proposed and existing recreation units such as parkways, wildlife areas, and parks.



Spruce Knob Country

## LOCATION AND ROUTING

### Estuary

On the Maryland shore, the trail could begin at Point Lookout and travel northwesterly to St. Mary's City through the piney coastal plains of Maryland's "Western Shore." Continuing on, the pathway would parallel the St. Mary's River, join the U. S. Navy Railroad grade, and follow this grade to Cedarville State Park. This segment between the St. Mary's River and Cedarville State Park may need additional study, as possible better routes exist south of the railroad and closer to the Potomac estuary.

From Cedarville State Park the trailway would turn west along Mattawoman Creek through an authorized state park area, later crossing to Piscataway Creek. The trail would then follow that creek to its confluence with the Potomac at Fort Washington, where it would pick up the open space corridor preserved and authorized for the Maryland extension of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

On the Virginia shore, the trail would begin at Smith Point, marking the mouth of the Potomac, utilize an interesting old ferry, and lead generally north of and parallel to U. S. Highway 360 between the Wicomico and Potomac Rivers to avoid the large estuarine embayments. On reaching Nomini Creek, the trail route would turn downstream on that creek and share a common "park way" with the projected George Washington Country Parkway. The trail route would be fairly close to the parkway motor road through this area but may diverge considerably

through large land units along the way such as Westmoreland State Park, Stratford Hall, and George Washington Birthplace National Monument.

On Mathias Point Neck, the parkway and trail would intersect the old railroad to Dahlgren. This abandoned line would provide, on a smooth gradient, a major spur to historic Fredericksburg and to recreation opportunities on the Rappahannock River.

North of Widewater, parkway and trail corridors would diverge with the trail following the thin strips of land between the R F & P Railroad and the Potomac River, utilizing catwalks which might be attached to railroad bridges crossing the broad estuarine embayments of the upper Potomac.

Locations through the military installations of Quantico and Fort Belvoir may be limited by security and safety considerations. Imaginative planning and location, however, could make these trail segments equal in interest to any other.

#### Washington Metropolitan Area

From Fort Washington, on the Maryland shore, the Potomac Heritage Trail would follow the George Washington Memorial Parkway route into Washington, where the traveler would have two choices. One route could cross the Anacostia on Capitol Street Bridge, follow South Capitol Street to the Capitol, continue west along the Mall to Potomac Parkway, finally joining the C & O Canal in Georgetown. An alternative to this cross-city, monumental route would be one following Fort Circle Park. This proposed trailway would connect the



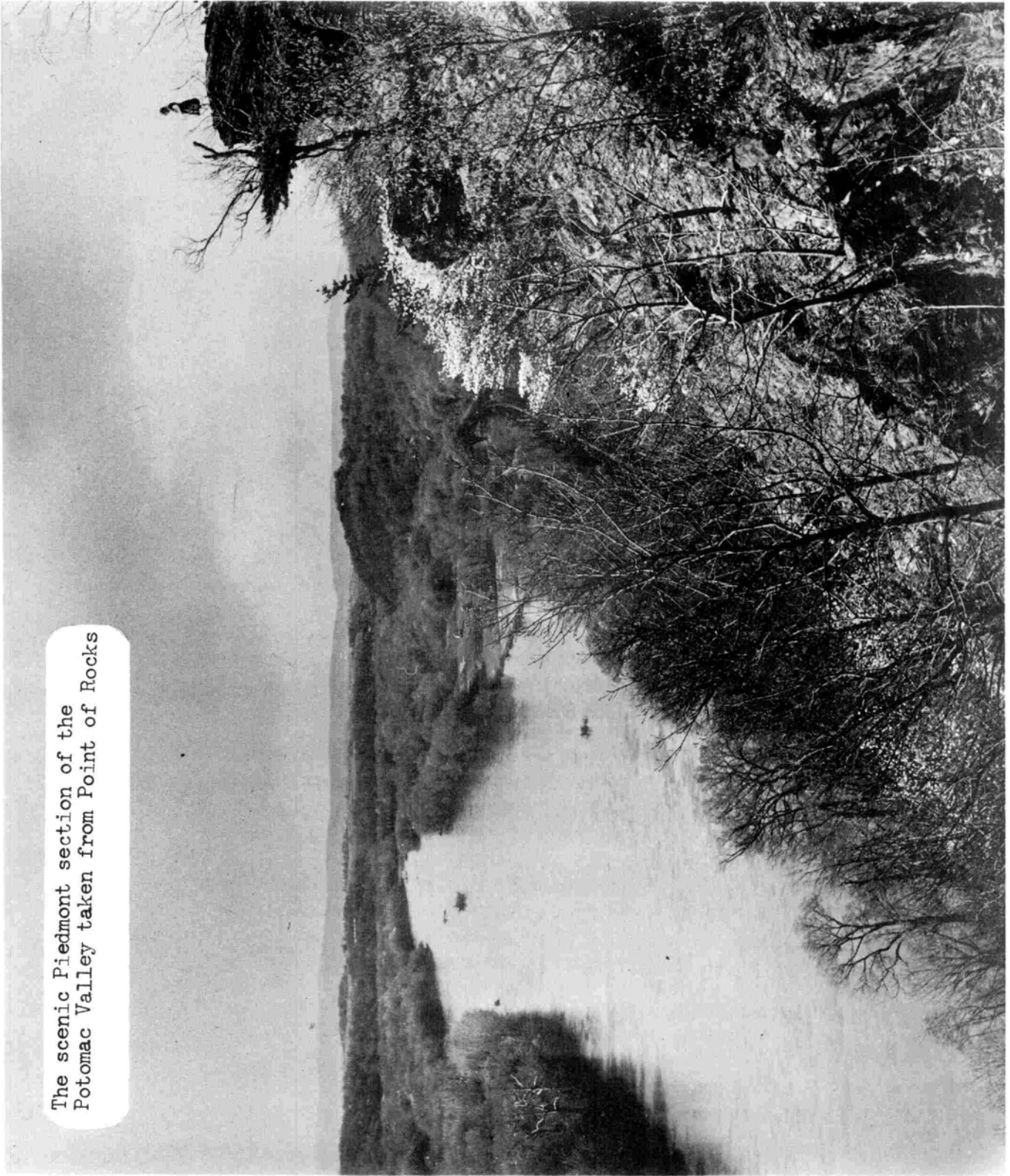
Civil War forts which once defended Washington. The traveler would continue on Fort Circle to Rock Creek Park, then turn south along that extensive urban green space to again join the C & O Canal in Georgetown.

On the Virginia side at Mt. Vernon the trail would join the George Washington Memorial Parkway and follow this route into Alexandria. There the trail would utilize streets and sidewalks through historic Alexandria. North of Alexandria the trail would continue east of the parkway motor road, then perhaps follow an existing service road around the edge of Washington National Airport. Once past the airport it would continue on between the parkway and the Potomac. Memorial Bridge with its wide walkways would make an excellent pedestrian and cycling approach into the city and a pedestrian bridge would afford access to Roosevelt Island from the trail.

Through the Washington-Northern Virginia area, careful location and signing will be required to ameliorate the obvious safety hazards to pedestrians and cyclists caused by the large volume of motor traffic.

A companion trail to the C & O Canal would continue on the Virginia shore as suggested by the Arlington Planning Commission in its report, "Potomac Nature Trails." From Arlington to Great Falls, the trail could fall within the conservation area of the George Washington Memorial Parkway, but would be in close proximity to the river's edge rather than along the top of the Palisades. Thus, these two corridor facilities should not conflict.

The scenic Piedmont section of the  
Potomac Valley taken from Point of Rocks



On the Maryland shore the trail traveler would approach Great Falls by the canal towpath and along the way would be joined by a number of urban feeder trails.

### The Piedmont

Westward from Great Falls through the Piedmont, a trail would continue along the Virginia shore through a green space dedicated to Potomac Parkway use and preservation of the Potomac River shoreline. The trail would generally lie between the parkway and river. In Maryland another leg of the trunk trail would continue west along the C & O Canal.

On approaching Harpers Ferry, the south half of the trail would cross the river, utilizing U. S. 340 Bridge as does the Appalachian Trail at this point, and join the canal towpath. Harpers Ferry could be made accessible from the C & O Canal by crossing the lightly-used, downstream railroad bridge which already has a catwalk but is closed to public use.

### The Great Valley

West of Harpers Ferry through the Great Valley the C & O Canal towpath would form the Potomac Heritage Trail. In this section a major spur might follow Antietam Creek north to Antietam Battlefield. This creek has been suggested in the Potomac study as a free-flowing stream.

### Northwest Prong

From Old Town the trail would continue westward along the C & O Canal, then around Cumberland to the "Narrows," along Haystack Mountain and across Dans Rock.

From Dans Rock the route would flow westward to Savage River Reservoir and State Forest, carefully avoiding the many strip mines in this area. Continuing up Big Run, near the recreation development there, the trail would follow Bear Creek to Youghiogheny Reservoir and along one shore of that reservoir, including a short section of the famous Mason-Dixon Line. Continuing downstream through Youghiogheny Gorge, a proposed Pennsylvania state park area, to Ohio-pyle, the trail would turn north along Laurel Ridge, linking four Pennsylvania state parks, finally terminating at Johnstown. The section would utilize a 57-mile Pennsylvania State trail which is under development.

### Southwest Prong

With its ultimate destination at the high point of the Potomac Basin, Spruce Knob, the trail would cross the Potomac at Old Town and follow the South Branch River, one of the Basin's finest free-flowing streams. This would carry the trail through the Trough, traverse Smoke Hole Gorge, and reach Seneca Rocks before climbing the slopes to Spruce Knob. A major spur on this prong could link Dolly Sods, Canaan Valley, and Blackwater Falls State Park to the Trunk System.



Beautiful, fascinating "Trough" area

## LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE

### Maryland

The terminus feature, Point Lookout, is State owned. Between Point Lookout and the Navy Railroad, trail lands are privately owned and are mostly wooded with some farming. From the St. Mary's River to Cedarville State Park the trail would follow the Federally-owned right-of-way of the Navy Railroad. This section is characterized by forests and farmland, particularly tobacco farms, south of the railroad and a major highway to the north. Additional right-of-ways would be desirable south of the railroad line, but to the north, commercial and residential developments and high land values may preclude further acquisition.

Between Cedarville State Park and Fort Washington along Mattawoman and Piscataway Creeks, the trail route is privately-owned and almost entirely forested. A narrow right-of-way through here would probably suffice for trail purposes, although local and state officials have indicated interest in a much broader band along the creeks for general park, recreation, and open space purposes.

The projected trail corridor between Fort Washington and the District of Columbia is either Federally owned or authorized for acquisition for parkway purposes. These lands are wooded and some contain scattered residences. About 75 percent of the Fort Circle is now publicly owned, and the Rock Creek Park segment is entirely in public ownership. On the cross-city segment utilizing the Mall, no





Swimming in Maryland's New Germany  
Recreation Area

additional acquisition is required, as the route would follow existing streets, walkways, and public lands. The entire C & O Canal is publicly owned, but significant additions of land are necessary to preserve the scenic, pastoral qualities of this famous route. These additional lands would, while preserving the Canal environment itself, offer space for development of recreation facilities and would preserve the famous Potomac riverscape scene. West of Cumberland along the route are publicly-owned Savage River State Forest and federal lands around Youghiogheny Reservoir.

#### Virginia

No public lands exist between Smith Point and Westmoreland State Park which might be utilized for the trail route.

The once federally-owned Dahlgren Railroad was recently sold to the R F & P Railway Company. If it can be recovered by the Federal government or arrangements made with the R F & P, this route can provide an excellent trail spur into Fredericksburg. Between the Fredericksburg spur and Mt. Vernon, major public lands exist at the Quantico and Fort Belvoir military bases and Gunston Hall on Mason Neck is state owned. Between Mt. Vernon and Cabin John Bridge, the trail corridor is federally owned with the exception of the Alexandria segment, where the trail would utilize existing publicly owned roads and walks.

Between Cabin John Bridge and Great Falls the most desirable trail corridor, along the River's bluffs and edge, is privately owned

but authorized for federal purchase.

West of Great Falls the proposed route along the Virginia shore is privately owned. These lands are utilized largely for farming and offer a beautiful contrast to the largely wooded sections in other areas of the trail corridor.

#### West Virginia

The only public lands along the West Virginia portion of the Potomac Heritage Trail lie toward the terminal feature of the route. The U. S. Forest Service has large holdings in this area, particularly along the ridges. The private lands through this area are almost entirely forested.

#### Pennsylvania

Youghiogheny Reservoir offers a public lands corridor into Pennsylvania and the scenic Youghiogheny Gorge. Along Laurel Ridge north of the gorge are large state forest, game, and park lands. The proposed 18,000-acre Ohiopyle State Park will ultimately include the Youghiogheny Gorge. The proposed Laurel Ridge Connector Park between Youghiogheny Gorge and Johnstown would provide a continuous strip of public lands in which the trail could be located.

## METHOD OF CONTROL

Over public lands an adequate trail corridor should be zoned for permanent trail use to prevent adverse encroachment. Public agencies must scrupulously avoid installations and land uses which would detract from enjoyment of the trail and trailside values.

Over private land right-of-ways only would be purchased where feasible. These right-of-ways could be augmented by scenic easements where additional scenic protection is desirable. Other lands needed for recreation development, for trail management or where other land controls fail, would be purchased in fee.

Around built-up areas and in areas vulnerable to summer home development the trail corridor should be purchased in fee. Through rural areas the right-of-way method should be effective. Acquisition of private lands should be coordinated with acquisition for other purposes such as parkways and, west of Washington, with the proposed enlargement of the C & O Canal properties. Upstream from Washington, acquisition of lands on both sides of the river will preserve the view from the trails on the opposing side.

West of Harpers Ferry it is imperative that private lands between the canal and the river be placed in public ownership. At a minimum, a sufficient width of land to provide adequate screening between the towpath and private development should be acquired.

In general, it is not felt that zoning could adequately provide and protect trail corridors although this device may be useful in

enhancing the broader scenic aspects or secondary zone of a relatively narrow trail corridor. Zoning regulations are frequently too weak, are subject to political maneuvering, and are not generally applicable to a trail situation. Zoning is thus not considered a useful tool in acquiring the actual trail right-of-way, but may be useful in broadening the effectiveness of the trail corridor.

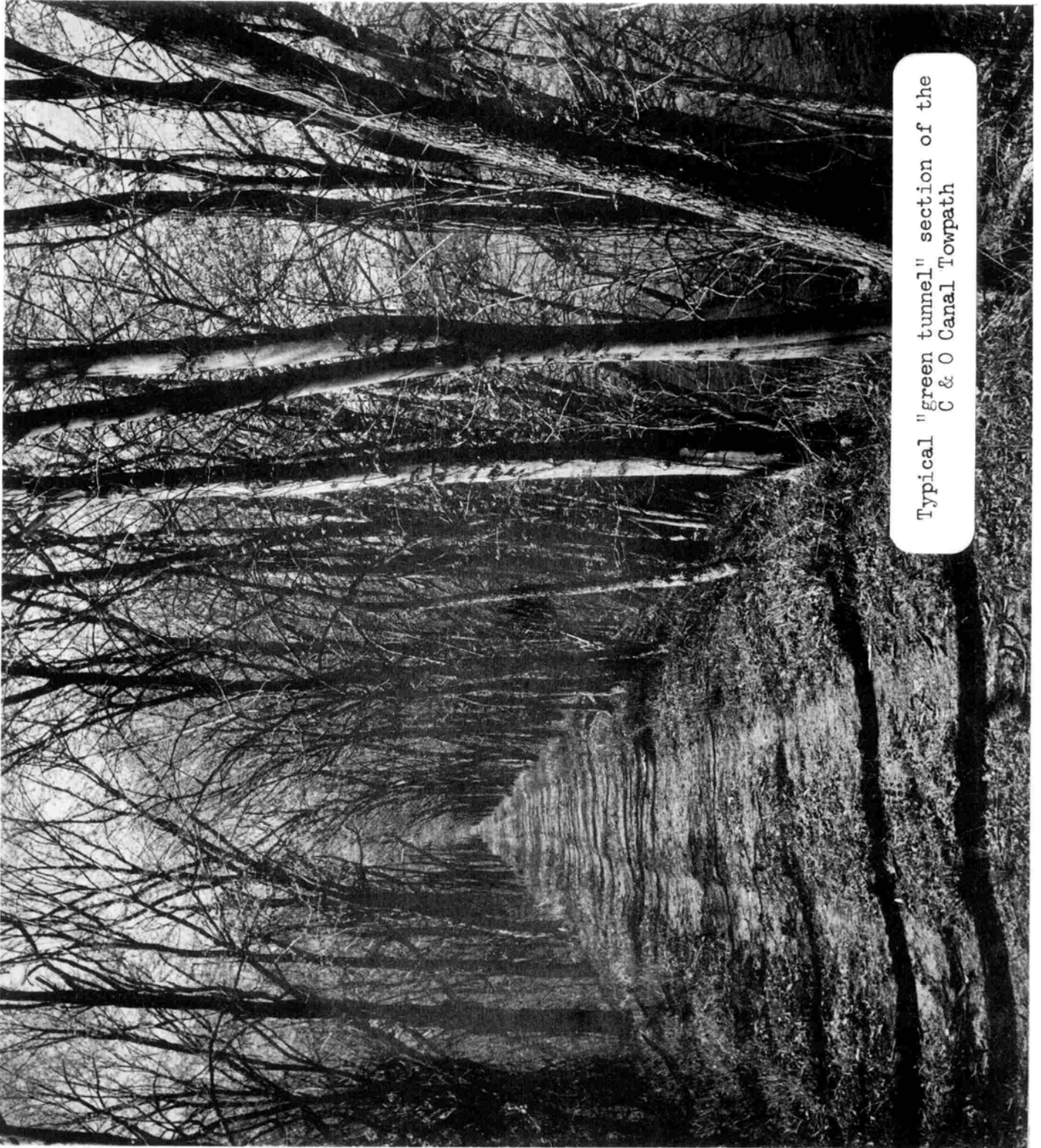
## CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

The C & O Canal towpath sets a standard that should be utilized for most of the Potomac Heritage Trail. This is a double-track, well-graded, gravel-base, stone-chip-surfaced trailway. Except for mountain locations, this standard would be an excellent one to guide development of the remainder of the Potomac Heritage Trail. This trail would thus be unique in another feature--that of width--for here hikers and cyclists could traverse the route "two by two" rather than single file as is the case with most other well-known trails. At the same time, maintenance, construction, and protection vehicles could utilize the trailway.

In mountainous areas and in narrow stream valleys, the trail might assume a normal single track. Otherwise, surfacing, width, and gradients should be as similar as possible to the C & O Canal towpath. In certain terrain, the smooth gradients of the C & O Canal are neither economically or esthetically attainable. However, the gradient should not be steeper than say, five percent, to facilitate cycling and to allow continuity of travel. In the mountainous areas, grades of 10 to 15 percent may be necessary.

Marking of the trail might be accomplished by specially designed metal discs mounted on metal posts or attached securely to trailside trees. Urban trail locations might combine painted pavement markings with this disc.





Typical "green tunnel" section of the  
C & O Canal Towpath

The marking system should also be integrated into the system for marking the nationwide system of trunk trails, if such a marking is deemed desirable and feasible.

The trail's diversity of landscape type, historic setting, and adjacent land uses dictates that structure designs be made to fit the nature of the country through which a particular segment of the trail passes. For example, trail structures in the Tidewater region could have a colonial motif, perhaps modeled after a shed out-building of a tidewater plantation. Along the C & O Canal, shelters might be provided at the existing and proposed "hiker-biker over-nighters." The old lock-tenders' residences might be rehabilitated or reconstructed for interpretive purposes. On the Virginia shore of the Potomac, the structure should be crisp, neat and modern in line, but utilizing native materials to capture the flavor of the countryside. Along the trail to the southwest and northwest, the structures might be typical "Adirondack" type shelters.

An unusually good opportunity exists along the Potomac Heritage Trail to implement the hostel idea. This is particularly true at Point Lookout, Washington, Fredericksburg, Seneca, and Harpers Ferry, where trail users might be expected to linger for a time. Several historic buildings and unused military installations occur along the trail corridor, and can well be converted to this use. Examples are the old Point Lookout Hotel, the old Tea Room at George Washington

Birthplace National Monument, Fort Washington, and several fine old homes adjacent to the C & O Canal.

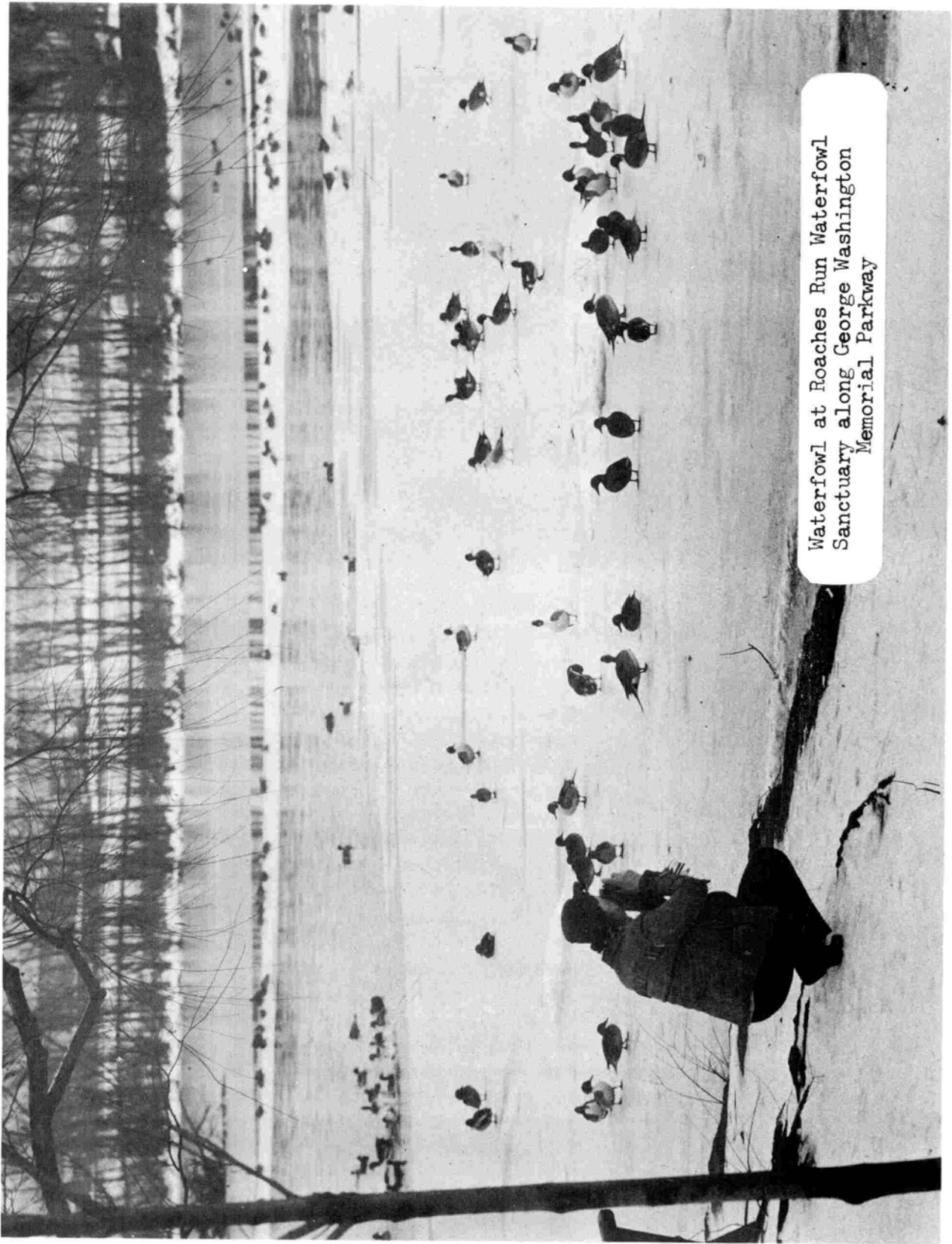
In the design of these shelters and hostels it is important that adequate space be provided for a large number of bicycles. Due to the abundance of easy access, availability of nearby commercial overnight accommodations, and the existence of a number of public camping areas, the frequency of shelter location must be determined by characteristics of individual sections of the route. No regular spacing could be described at this point, although 10-12 mile spacing is contemplated to accommodate hikers on the C & O Canal.

## USES

All trail sections would be open for foot travel. From the Smith Point and Point Lookout termini to Washington the trail would be designed for cycling and hiking. The trail above Washington on the Maryland shore (C & O Canal) would also be restricted to foot and bicycle traffic. On the opposite shore, through Virginia's horse country, trail use would not be restricted. West of Harpers Ferry on the C & O Canal, the prohibition on horse travel would continue to prevent "spading up" the smooth towpath surface. Through this area a companion, parallel riding trail may well be constructed. There would be no restrictions on those sections northwest and southwest of Cumberland; however, topography may preclude cycling. Motor vehicle traffic is considered altogether incompatible with the quieter trail uses suggested for the Potomac Heritage Trail.

Agricultural uses, such as cropland and grazing, should be continued in selected situations adjacent to the trail corridor. These uses are very much a part of the Potomac scene and, carefully controlled, will add to the diversity of the scene while providing scenic vistas.

The Potomac Heritage Trail will offer access to numerous waterfowl and upland game hunting areas. Use of the Potomac trail as a route of access to these hunting areas would be compatible with the recreation intent of the trail. Hunting should be prohibited in built-up areas



Waterfowl at Roaches Run Waterfowl  
Sanctuary along George Washington  
Memorial Parkway

and areas of intense recreation use. Most hunting activities do not coincide with other intensive recreation use seasons, so use conflicts should be minimal.

Forestry activities may continue in areas adjacent to the trail although a narrow band, say of 200 feet, might be preserved in a "modified management area." Timber stand improvement could materially enhance the esthetic appeal of the woodlands through which the trail would pass, and carefully controlled, selective cutting and removal of slash may not interfere with trail enjoyment. Good forestry practices could provide educational and interpretive demonstration areas. Vista and wildlife clearings might be seeded to attract wildlife to the trailside.

Strip mining should be prohibited within the trail corridor itself. Improved and enforced reclamation practices could maintain the trailside scene while returning the land to productivity. At the same time the trail could traverse selected mined areas to illustrate this method of mineral extraction and good land reclamation practices.

Practically all forms of recreation use would be compatible with this trail. Its diversity of landscape and recreation resource would offer abundant opportunity to fulfill practically every recreation aspiration.

This diversity of landscape suggests essentially a system of connected, individual trails, unified into a whole by consistent marking and construction standards. Various segments will be of interest to different groups, few of whom will travel the entire



distance; however, the challenge and the unity are there. Most use will come at points where vehicular access to the trail is available and where major visitor developments are installed.

Through built-up areas, the trail will become the object of a considerable amount of local use, which should be encouraged, by allowing complete freedom of access, gradual blending of the trail corridor into adjacent land uses, and installation of recreation facilities. While the administering agency of the trail itself should not be called upon to provide facilities strictly for local use, local recreation agencies might assume responsibility for these needs of their own people.

## FEEDER AND ACCESS TRAILS

Below are listed many feeder and access trails of a Potomac Regional Trail System which could connect to the Potomac Heritage Trail.

### 1. Maryland Side of the Estuary

a. Zekiah Swamp Trail would fall within the large potential Zekiah Swamp recreation area, valued both for general recreation and fish and wildlife purposes.

b. Mattawoman Creek Trail would connect potential and existing recreation facilities in the Maryland Point and Indian Head areas to the trunk trail.

### 2. Virginia Side of the Potomac Estuary

a. Washington Country Trail could parallel the George Washington Country Parkway from Yorktown and join the Potomac Heritage Trail at Nomini Creek. This feeder would provide a tie to the popular historic shrines at Yorktown, Williamsburg and Jamestown.

b. Fredericksburg Spur is important, short, and simple enough to be classified as the major spur of the Potomac Heritage Trail and a part of that system rather than as a feeder or access route. It would connect the historically important Fredericksburg area and the mid-Rappahannock recreation potentials to the Potomac estuary.

c. Quantico feeder would parallel Quantico Creek and provide access to Prince William Forest Park.

d. Agua feeder could utilize an abandoned railroad right-of-way to join Marlborough Point to trunk trail.

3. Washington Metropolitan Area

a. Occoquan Creek Trail would provide access to Occoquan Park, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Bull Run Mountain, and other important recreation and cultural features of the Northern Virginia area.

b. Pimmit Run Trail would give access to the heavily suburbanized area of Falls Church, Vienna, and north Fairfax County.

c. Anacostia River Trail would traverse Anacostia Park and offers access to the trunk trail from the built-up areas along that river valley.

d. Rock Creek Trail provides access through this popular open space corridor to the trunk from the heavily populated northwest quadrant of Washington and adjacent Maryland suburban areas.

e. Muddy Branch Trail would provide access from the far western portion of the Maryland suburbanized area.

4. Piedmont Area

a. Goose Creek Trail would connect the proposed Goose Creek Regional Park and proposed Bull Run Mountain State Park to the Potomac trunk. This trail in combination with the Occoquan Creek Trail points out the possibility of an outer loop trailway around the Virginia portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area.

b. Sugarland Run Trail would provide access to the Potomac Trail from the growing areas of Reston, Herndon, Sterling, and others around Dulles International Airport.

c. Catoctin Trail would extend north along the Catoctin-Bull Run Mountain spine to join the Potomac Heritage Trail at Point of Rocks.

d. Short Hill Trail would tie proposed Short Hill State Park to the Potomac trunk just east of Harpers Ferry.

e. Seneca Creek Trail would connect suburban western Montgomery County and Seneca Creek State Park to the Potomac corridor.

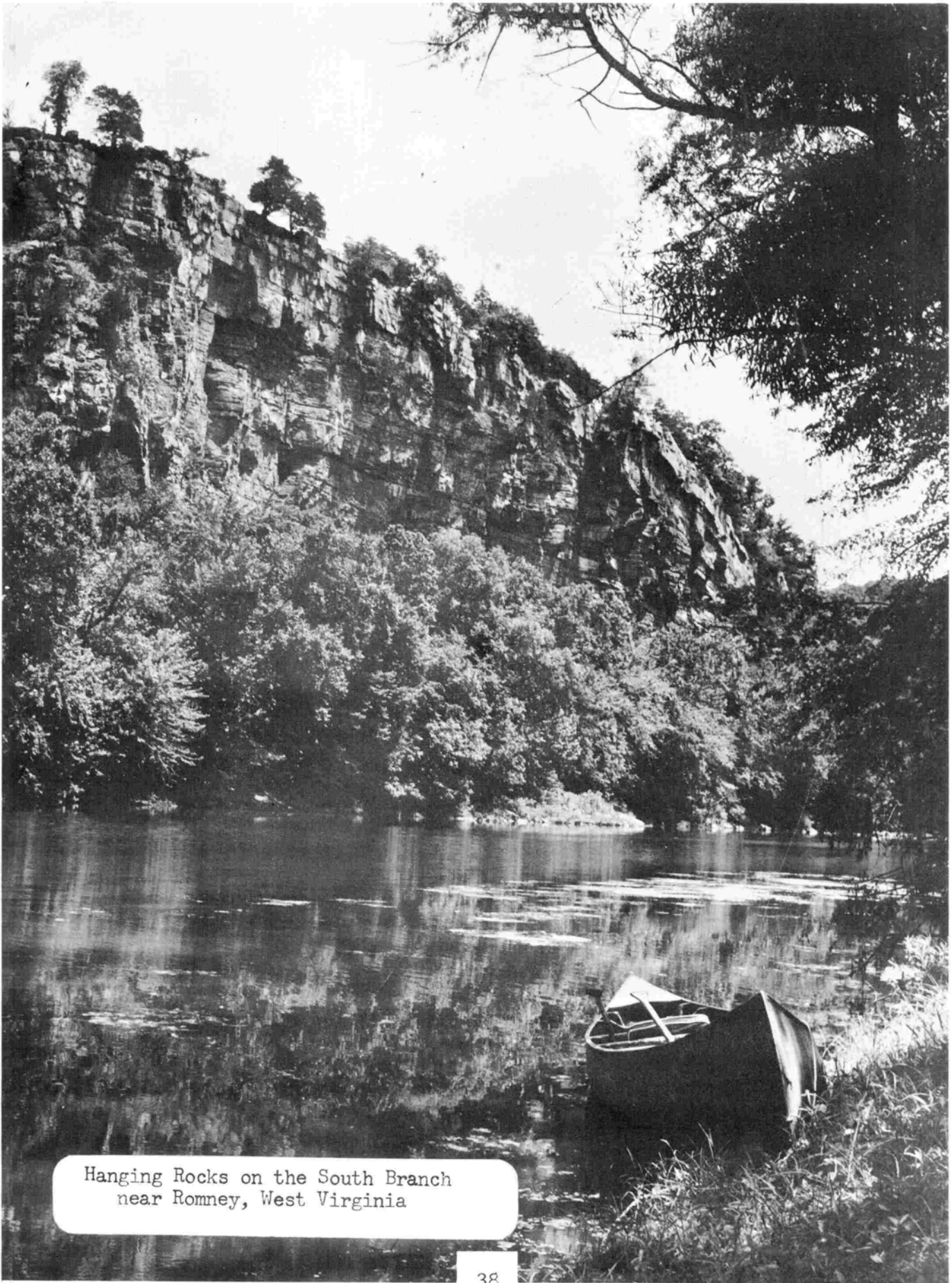
f. Monocacy Trail would follow the Monocacy River, connecting Frederick with the Potomac, and providing recreation access to the Monocacy River.

g. Catoctin Mountain provides a scenic trail potential down a narrow spine overlooking the beautiful Piedmont area of Maryland.

5. The Appalachian Trail, an existing trunk trail, crosses the proposed Potomac Heritage Trail just east of Harpers Ferry. Thus, the Potomac Basin is ideally trans-ected by major trunk trails-- existing and proposed. The Appalachian Trail traverses the Basin north to south and the Potomac Heritage Trail is proposed to provide the same recreation, open space opportunity across the Basin's east-west axis.

## 6. Great Valley

a. Opequon Creek would connect Winchester and Martinsburg to the Potomac Trail along Opequon Creek, a stream proposed for free-flowing



Hanging Rocks on the South Branch  
near Romney, West Virginia

status by the state of West Virginia.

b. Antietam Trail is of enough significance to warrant its classification as a major spur and would connect Antietam Battlefield with the Potomac trail. A north continuation of this trail would connect Hagerstown to the Potomac along Antietam Creek, another stream suggested as a free-flowing stream for the Potomac Basin.

c. Conococheague Creek Trail traverses the beautiful Great Valley section of Pennsylvania and Maryland.

#### 7. Appalachian Highlands

a. Sleepy Creek Trail would connect Sleepy Creek Recreation Area, an important public hunting resource, to the Potomac.

b. Cacapon Mountain Trail would tie Cacapon State Park to the Potomac.

c. Cacapon River Trail - a riverside trail along this outstanding free-flowing stream would provide an excellent connection into the proposed Cacapon Wild River Area. This trail could connect to the Cacapon Mountain Trail and travel along the spine of that ridge to Hancock where it could cross the Potomac to join the Potomac Heritage Trail.

d. Licking Creek Trail connects Scrub Ridge and Tuscarora Mountain to the Potomac.

e. Sideling Hill Trail provides access to Washington County State Game Reserve and Buchanan State Forest in Pennsylvania along a very scenic, narrow spine extending north from the Potomac. A portion of



this trail could be located along Sideling Hill Creek and Tonoloway Creek.

f. Green Ridge Trail provides a trail corridor through Green Ridge State Forest to the Potomac trail at the mouth of Town Creek.

8. Northwest Prong.

a. Wills Mountain Trail could provide a connection to Cumberland City Reservoir on Evitts Creek, Buchanan State Forest, and Martin Hill Forest Monument.

b. Dans Mountain Trail would provide ridge-top access from Dans Mountain State Park to proposed Dans Rock State Park and the Potomac Trail.

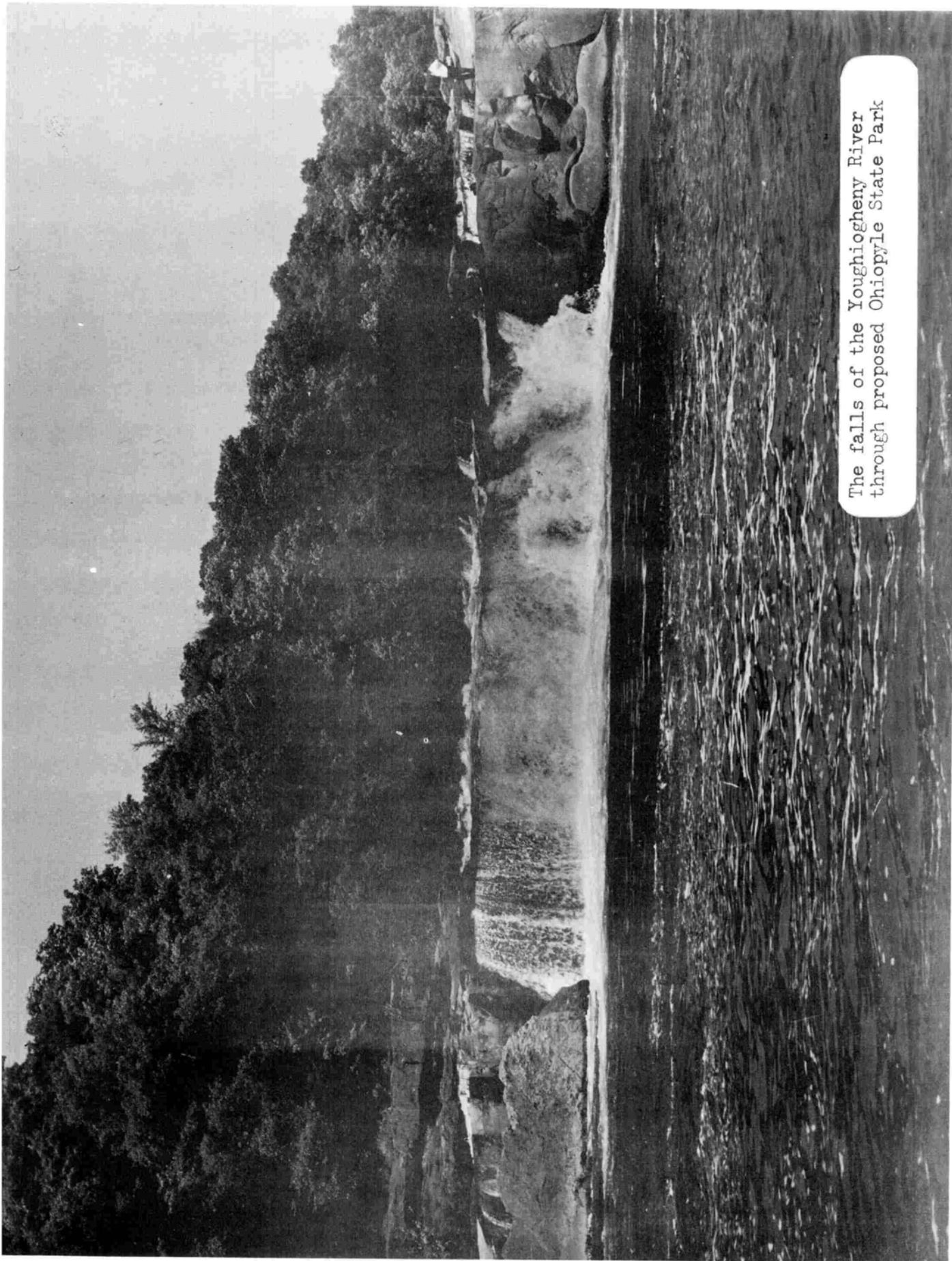
c. Negro Mountain Trail would give access from the trunk to Deep Creek State Park.

9. Southwest Prong

a. Canaan Valley Trail would provide another very important spur connection to Blackwater Falls State Park, unique Canaan Valley, and proposed Canaan Valley State Park.

b. Allegheny Front Trail would continue southward along the crest of the mountains between Virginia and West Virginia.

c. North Fork Mountain Trail is intersected east of Seneca Rocks. It is a primary trail in the system of trails within the proposed Spruce Knob-Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area.



The falls of the Youghioghny River  
through proposed Oniopyle State Park

## ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

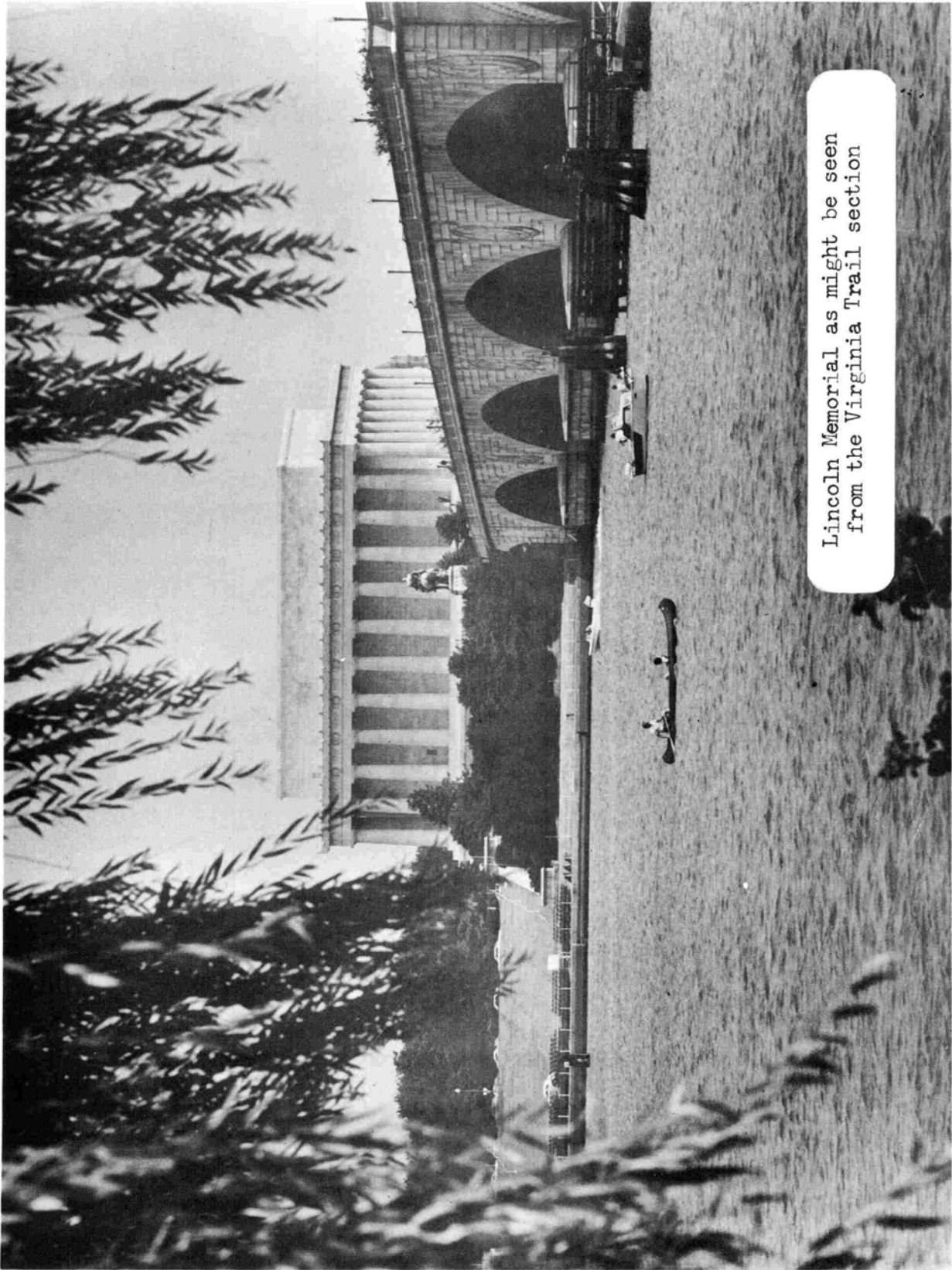
The Potomac Heritage Trail from Point Lookout to Fort Washington could be a State of Maryland responsibility, probably administered by Maryland's Department of Forests and Parks which has several areas along the trail corridor. From there into Washington, the trail could be the responsibility of the National Park Service in conjunction with the George Washington Memorial Parkway and Fort Circle.

On the Virginia side of the Potomac estuary, the Potomac Trail could be a state responsibility from Smith Point to Mt. Vernon. The segment between Nomini Creek and Mt. Vernon could later become a Federal responsibility in conjunction with the proposed George Washington Country Parkway. From Washington to Cumberland, the trail would be Federal responsibility administered by the National Park Service, including the C & O Canal and the trail on the Virginia shore, although the Virginia section could well be a state or regional responsibility.

The Fredericksburg and Antietam spurs may be best suited to Federal construction, operation, and maintenance in conjunction with National Park Service areas and proposals.

Northwest and southwest of Cumberland, the trail would be the responsibility of the states which it traverses. The southern end of the Potomac Trail where it enters the Monongahela National Forest could be constructed, operated, and maintained by the U. S. Forest Service.

Private trail clubs may well be interested in location, construction, and maintenance of some segments of these trails, particularly those which may be located on lands which are now privately owned. Many of these clubs already perform these services on both public and private lands.



Lincoln Memorial as might be seen  
from the Virginia Trail section

COSTS

All Costs Shown Are 10-Year Totals

<u>LAND COSTS</u> - 825 miles of trailway, 53% of which is publicly owned or authorized for public acquisition for other purposes, 390 miles at 20 acres per mile for total of 7800 acres at average \$200 per acre for fee title or adequate interest in land for trail purposes		\$ 1,560,000
<u>CONSTRUCTION</u>		
<u>Trailway</u> - Double track for hiking and bicycling; 160 miles @ \$5,000 per mile	800,000	
<u>Trail</u> - Hiking and riding; 390 miles @ \$2,000 per mile	780,000	
<u>Trailways</u> - 275 miles existing or authorized for construction	No Cost	
<u>Signs and Markers</u> - Does not include normal, planned signing in existing areas; 825 miles at \$100 per mile	82,500	
<u>Shelters and Campgrounds</u> - Includes well, latrine and other appurtenances; does not include normal, planned construction in existing areas; one each 10 miles; 82 @ \$10,000 each	820,000	
Total Construction Costs		2,482,500
<u>PLANNING, DESIGN AND ENGINEERING</u>		150,000
<u>OPERATION</u>		700,000
<u>MAINTENANCE</u>		
<u>Trailway</u> - Hiking and bicycling; 525 miles at \$120 per mile per year	630,000	
<u>Trailway</u> - Hiking and riding; 300 miles at \$50 per mile per year	150,000	
<u>Signs and Markers</u> - Lump sum	50,000	
<u>Shelters and Campgrounds</u>	250,000	
Total Maintenance Costs		1,080,000
<u>10 - YEAR TOTAL</u>		<u>\$ 5,972,500</u>



## FINANCING

Much of the Potomac trail could be financed through regular channels, particularly on Federal lands involved, such as Monongahela National Forest, C & O Canal National Monument, and the proposed George Washington Country Parkway. Potomac Heritage Trail proposals could be incorporated into the master plans of these areas and implemented along with their normal recreation programs.

State segments of the Potomac trail will, no doubt, require some special financing. These trails should be incorporated in the state-wide recreation plans and thus qualify for assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Until complete protection can be realized by acquisition of scenic easements and fee titles along the trail, volunteer trail organizations could locate, construct, and maintain trails over private lands. Public ownership and protection of the corridor will be urgent, particularly in and near built-up areas. In these built-up areas, trail corridors might be preserved through use of the Open Space "701" program administered by the Housing and Home Finance Agency.



Seneca Rocks from the North Fork

## EFFECTS ON PRESENT USES

The Potomac Heritage Trail already has a dramatic effect on the localities served by the C & O Canal, and this may be illustrative of the effect on other communities along an expanded trail system. Already thousands of residents of the Washington area enjoy the C & O Canal for cycling, hiking, and riding. In addition, the Canal itself is the major means of river access for canoeing, fishing, hunting and other water uses. The towpath is ideal for bird-watching. West of Great Falls, the towpath is used less intensively except in areas where highway access is available and recreation developments exist. The trail in this area, then, takes on a more primitive character and is enjoyed immensely by the ardent trail man.

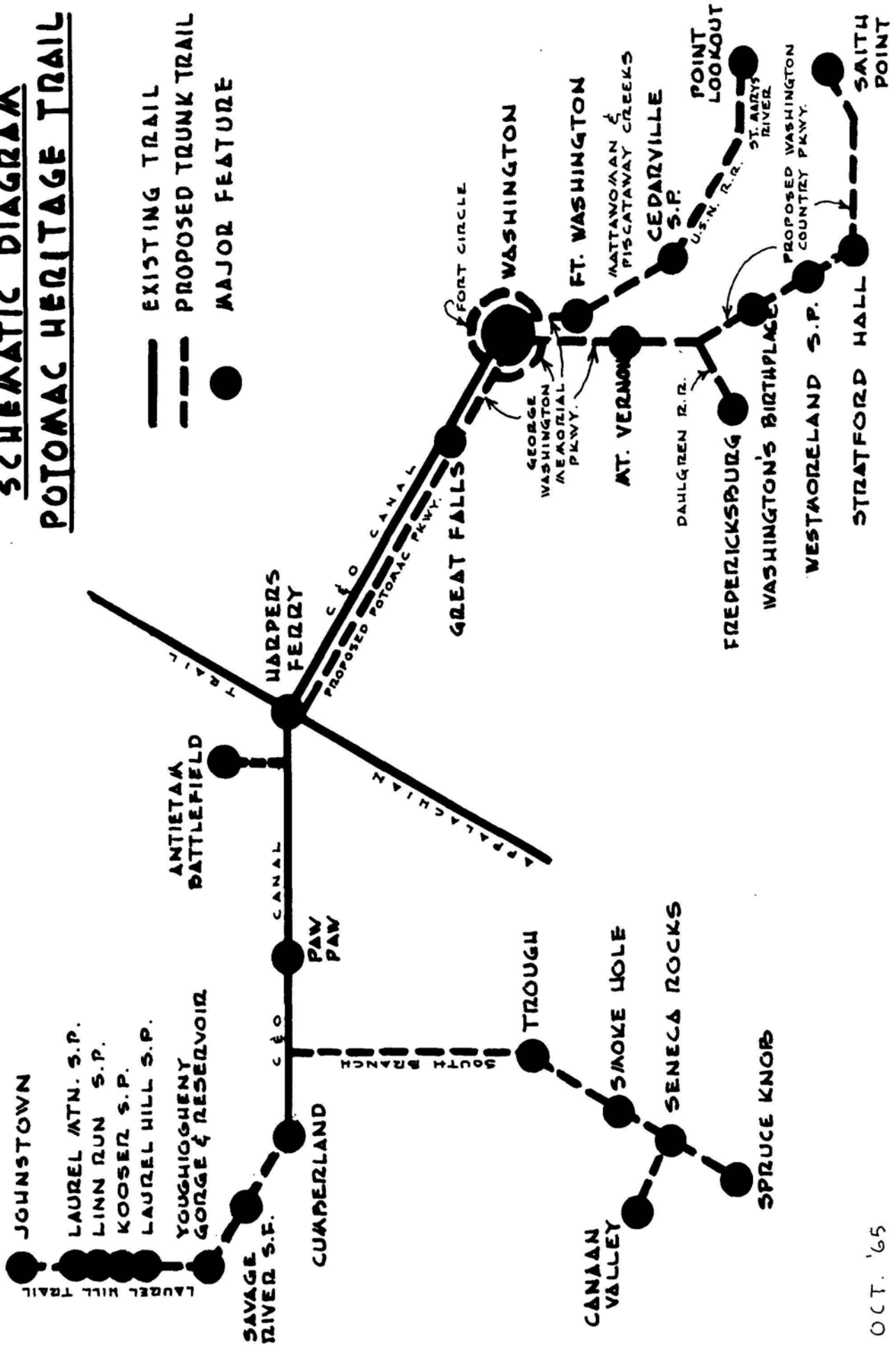
A Potomac Heritage Trail will offer unequalled access opportunity to the waters of the Potomac Valley for fishing, hunting, sight-seeing, camping, and other recreation activities.

Certain small key towns, such as Point Lookout, Harpers Ferry, Hancock, Paw Paw, and Old Town, along the route could well become trail targets for people throughout the country.

The critical item in this trail proposal is the acquisition and preservation of open space corridors for the trail and other purposes. This phase of the trail program should progress without delay. Trails can become a strong device--a nucleus--for the preservation of

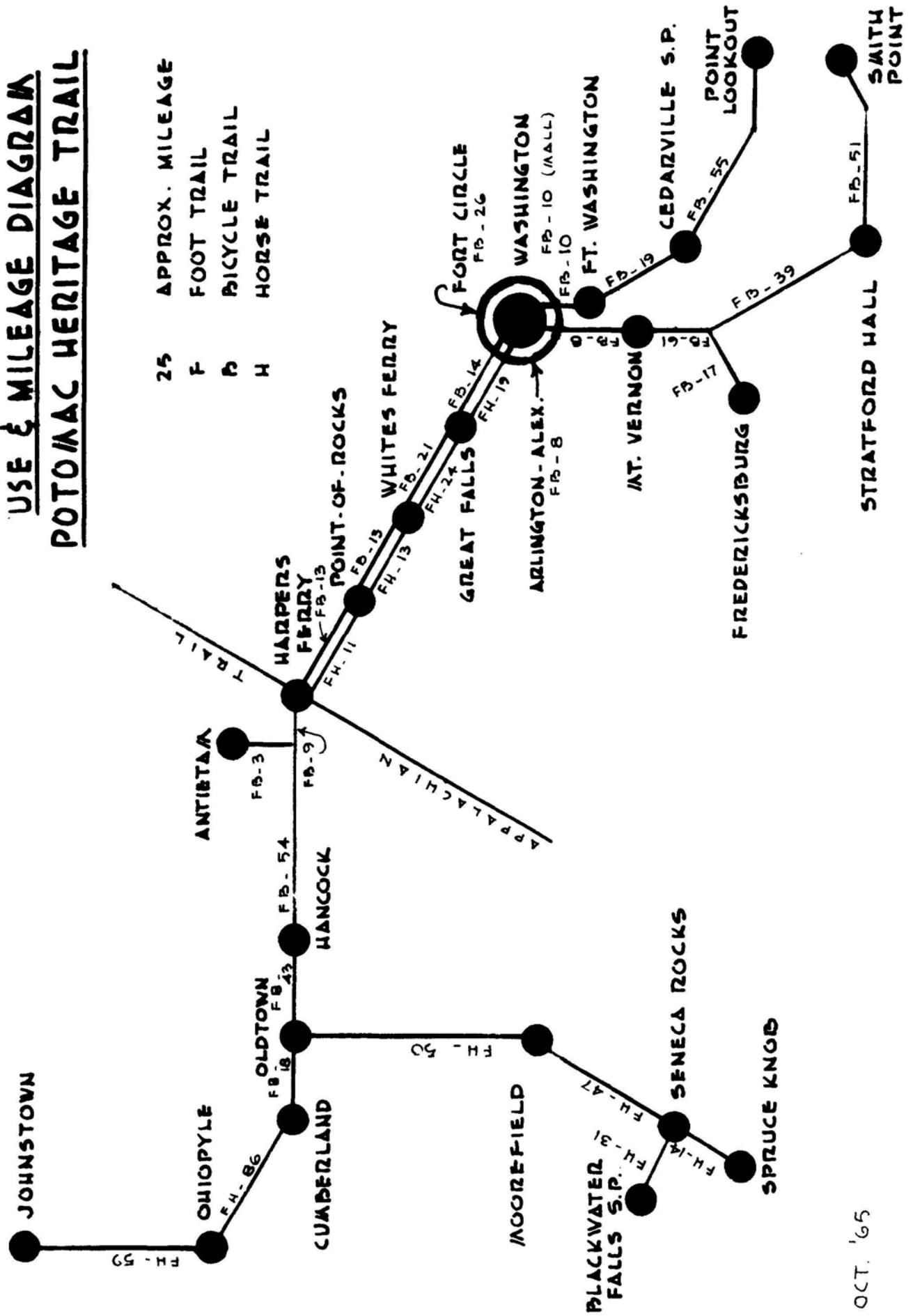
regional open spaces, acquisition of recreation lands, and development of a green network to guide community development.

# SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM POTOMAC HERITAGE TRAIL



# USE & MILEAGE DIAGRAM

## POTOMAC HERITAGE TRAIL







# POTOMAC HERITAGE TRAIL

A PROPOSAL

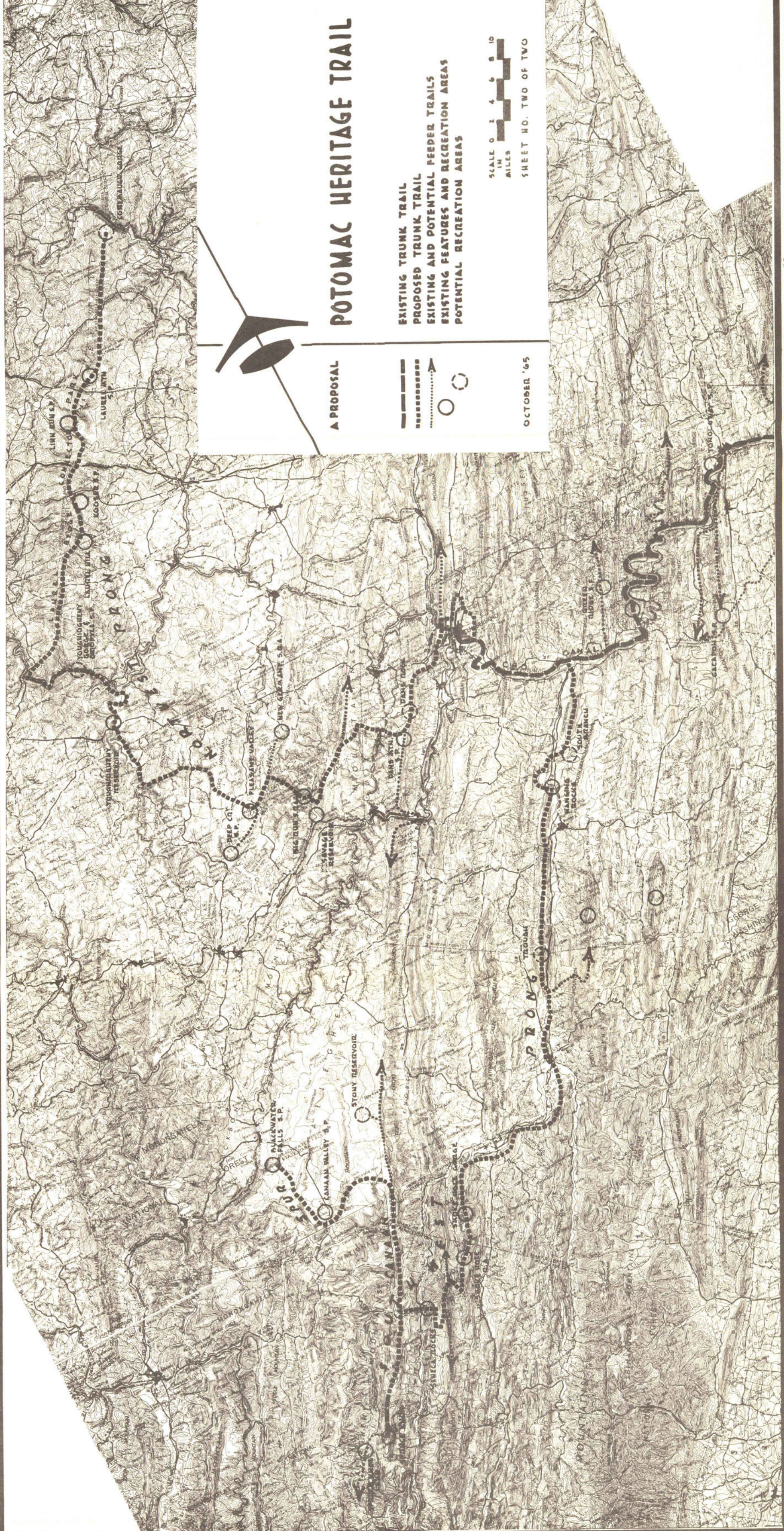
- EXISTING TRUNK TRAIL
- - - PROPOSED TRUNK TRAIL
- ..... EXISTING AND POTENTIAL FEEDER TRAILS
- EXISTING FEATURES AND RECREATION AREAS
- POTENTIAL RECREATION AREAS



SHEET NO. ONE OF TWO

OCTOBER '65





# POTOMAC HERITAGE TRAIL

A PROPOSAL

- EXISTING TRUNK TRAIL
- - - PROPOSED TRUNK TRAIL
- ..... POTENTIAL FEEDER TRAILS
- EXISTING FEATURES AND RECREATION AREAS
- POTENTIAL RECREATION AREAS

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SHEET NO. TWO OF TWO

OCTOBER '65



## PERSONS CONTACTED

### STATES

#### Maryland

Mr. Spencer Ellis, Director, Department of Forests and Parks  
Mr. John T. Starr, Jr., State Planning Department  
Mr. George B. Shields, Assistant Director, Department of Game  
and Inland Fisheries

#### Pennsylvania

Mr. Maurice Goddard, Secretary, Department of Forests and Waters  
Mr. William C. Forrey, Assistant Director, Division of State Parks

#### Virginia

Mr. Marvin M. Sutherland, Director, Department of Conservation  
and Economic Development  
Mr. Chester F. Phelps, Executive Director, Commission of Game  
and Inland Fisheries  
Senator FitzGerald Bemiss, Chairman, Virginia Outdoor Recreation  
Study Commission

#### West Virginia

Mr. Lovell R. Greathouse, Planning and Research Division, Depart-  
ment of Commerce  
Mr. Kermit McKeever, Chief of Parks and Recreation, Department  
of Natural Resources

### REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS

Mr. Walter Schilling, Northern Virginia Regional Planning & Economic  
Development Commission  
Mr. William J. Stevens, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning  
Commission  
Mr. Charles L. Wiley, Northern Neck Regional Planning and Economic  
Development Commission, Virginia  
Mr. W. C. Dutton, Jr., National Capital Planning Commission  
Mr. Francis S. Kenny, Rappahannock Development Association, Fredericks-  
burg  
Mr. George Oberlander, National Capital Regional Planning Council

### FEDERAL AGENCIES

#### Department of Defense

Commanding Officer, U. S. Marine Base, Quantico, Virginia  
Commanding Officer, Patuxent Naval Air Station, Patuxent, Maryland  
Commanding Officer, Fort Belvoir, Virginia  
Commanding Officer, Army Transmitting Station, Woodbridge, Virginia

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Mr. Hamilton Pyle, Deputy Chief, Programs and Legislation  
Mr. Simon L. Cuskelly, Staff Assistant, Division of Programs  
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Mr. Ephe Olliver, Supervisor, Monongahela National Forest

Department of Interior

Mr. Robert M. Paul, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and  
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Mr. John Graves, Consultant to the Secretary

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Mr. George B. Hartzog, Director  
Mr. Theodor R. Swem, Assistant Director, Cooperative Activities  
Mr. T. Sutton Jett, Regional Director, National Capital Region  
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Mr. Elbert Cox, Regional Director, Southeast Region  
Mr. Jack K. Anderson, Task Force Coordinator  
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Historical Park  
Superintendent Edwin M. Dale, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal  
National Monument  
Superintendent Oscar F. Northington, Jr., Fredericksburg &  
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