Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
Northeast Region

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Maryland News

Area residents view the sights of Baltimore's Inner Harbor from a very different perspective…kayaks. Safety instructions and historical facts compliments of Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks. Photo: C-Kat Studios

PROJECTS AND PARTNERS 2014

CURRENT PROJECTS

1. **Assateague Gateway Trail**
2. **Bacon Ridge Natural Area Master Plan**
3. **Congregational Health Hubs**
4. **Gunpowder Watershed Conservation Plan**
5. **Open Space Conservation in Baltimore County Growth Area**
6. **Springfield Woods Asset Mapping and Visioning**
7. **Washington, DC Metro Area Urban Ecosystem Restoration**
8. **Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail**

Find out more about each project starting on page 2.

ABOUT US

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. Program staff provide technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate.

Recent Successes

Bacon Ridge Natural Area

At nearly 1,000 acres, Bacon Ridge Natural Area will be one of the largest units administered by Anne Arundel County Recreation and Parks Department. The Area's proximity to Annapolis has piqued the interest of recreationists while concerns for its natural resources prompted completion of a conservation easement co-held by Scenic Rivers Land Trust and Maryland Environmental Trust. Situated in the headwaters of the South River, an ecologically challenged river, environmentally-sensitive design and management is paramount if the Area is opened to the public. Steep slopes with highly erodible soils, large wetland complexes occupying stream floodplains, and expansive areas of invasive species further exacerbate challenges for potential future public use of the Area.

Charged with the difficult task of balancing recreation demand with natural and cultural resource protection, a team of highly skilled practitioners have drafted a management plan recommending development of a carefully monitored and phased network of trails. With oversight by the Bacon Ridge Stewardship Committee, numerous alternatives were explored and comments from a community workshop carefully considered. From this process, a preliminary concept plan was developed locating potential access sites and trail alignments. With the preliminary plan as reference, a professional trail designer with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) flagged 12 miles of trail corridor.

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Current Projects

1. Assateague Gateway Trail

Project Partners: Lower Shore Land Trust, Assateague Island National Seashore
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: Town of Berlin and Worcester County
Congressional District: MD - 1

Project Goal

Build a 10-mile off-road multipurpose trail connecting the Town of Berlin to Assateague Island National Seashore and Assateague State Park. An expanded trail corridor will be established as an integral element to protect lands valued for natural, cultural, and scenic resources.

NPS Role

Facilitate a multi-stakeholder collaborative process to guide corridor land protection, design a multipurpose recreation trail, and leverage funds for easement acquisition and trail construction.

2. Bacon Ridge Natural Area Master Plan

Project Partner: Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: Crownsville
Congressional Districts: MD - 1, MD - 3

Project Goal

Build a series of multipurpose natural surface trails in Bacon Ridge Natural Area guided by the management plan and the Natural Area Stewardship Committee consistent with the preservation of the Area's scenic, rural, woodland, natural habitat, and wetland character.

NPS Role

Facilitate development of a collaborative process among public and private partners to guide resource management, establish a volunteer stewards program, and initiate trail construction.

3. Congregational Health Hubs

Project Partner: Baltimore Orchard Project
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: City of Baltimore
Congressional Districts: MD - 2, MD - 3, MD - 7

Project Goal

Develop a community-based demonstration project to create neighborhood health hubs located on congregational lands protected by local land trusts.

NPS Role

Facilitate a comprehensive and collaborative process to establish community health hubs, protect valued urban green space, and build enduring civic capacity for social change.

4. Gunpowder Watershed Conservation Plan

Project Partner: Gunpowder Valley Conservancy
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: Baltimore County
Congressional Districts: MD - 1, MD - 2, MD - 3, MD - 6, MD - 7

Project Goal

Develop a strategic land conservation agenda delineating high-value resource lands to guide collaborative partnerships working throughout the watershed.

NPS Role

Facilitate a multi-stakeholder collaborative process to delineate priority resource lands, build enduring partnerships, and leverage funds for land preservation.

"We can't thank you, National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, enough for your continued support in working with our partners in government, community organizations and other nonprofits to retrofit our aging suburbs in order to improve livability."

- Barbara Hopkins, JD, ASLA; Executive Director, NeighborSpace of Baltimore County

Current Projects

5. Open Space Conservation in Baltimore County Growth Area

Project Partner: NeighborSpace of Baltimore County
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: Baltimore County Urban Growth Area
Congressional Districts: MD - 1, MD - 3

Project Goal

Prepare a conservation plan to guide the protection of priority open space areas within the urban growth area where 90% of all County residents live.

NPS Role

Facilitate a multi-stakeholder collaborative process to prepare a conservation plan, strengthen partnerships, and leverage funds for land preservation and community sustainability.

6. Springfield Woods Asset Mapping and Visioning

Project Partner: Baltimore Green Space
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: City of Baltimore
Congressional Districts: MD - 2, MD - 3, MD - 7

Project Goal

Develop and pilot a process to map community assets and recruit local neighborhood stewards for the long-term care of Springfield Woods and to replicate the process throughout the City of Baltimore.

NPS Role

Facilitate an open and innovative process to effectively engage neighborhood residents, inventory available assets and resources, and establish a locally sustained network of land stewards.

7. Washington, DC Metro Area Urban Ecosystem Restoration

Project Partner: Urban Ecosystem Restorations
NPS Contact: Wink Hastings
Location: Washington, DC Metropolitan Region
Congressional Districts: DC - 1; MD - 4, MD - 5, MD - 8; VA - 8, VA - 10

Project Goal

Establish a Washington, DC Metropolitan land trust to develop a network of protected lands and demonstrate innovative approaches to land protection in highly urbanized areas.

NPS Role

Facilitate a process to establish organizational structure, develop conservation objectives, identify priority lands for protection, and build collaborative partnerships to effectively implement natural lands preservation in highly urbanized environments.

8. Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

Partner: Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
NPS Contact: Ursula Lemanski
Location: Potomac River watershed in Maryland and Virginia
Congressional Districts: VA - 1, VA - 8, VA - 10, VA - 11; MD - 4, MD - 5,MD - 6, MD - 8

Project Goal

Improved quality of life for residents and visitors to the Potomac watershed through the development of an interconnected network of trails for recreation, transportation, and heritage tourism.

NPS Role

Assist with community engagement, trail promotion, state-level policy development, regional coordination, and technical assistance to local jurisdictions in Maryland and Virginia, and in partnership with national park system units.

Project partners representing Anne Arundel County Recreation and Parks, Scenic Rivers Land Trust, and Mid-Atlantic Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts (a local chapter of IMBA) field check a trail flagged by an IMBA trail designer. Photo: NPS/Wink Hastings

We're Here For You.

Could your project benefit from NPS Staff Assistance? Contact us to find out.

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2014 Nationwide Partnership Success

3,278.74 Miles of Trail Developed

2,046.25 Miles of River Conserved

9,411.06 Acres of Open Space and Parkland Protected

Find more information online at
www.nps.gov/rtca

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Recent Successes cont.

In the event trail development is approved by the County with concurrence of the land trusts, a single 2-mile segment with limited parking will be built with a local IMBA chapter providing much of the labor and following IMBA's environmentally-sensitive techniques.

Volunteers collect samples of macro-invertebrates to evaluate the health of Bacon Ridge Branch. Photo: NPS

"We are delighted that NPS staff will assist in exploring how fruit trees and food forests anchored in strong neighborhood congregations can contribute to the personal, social and environmental health of our community."

- Nina Beth Cardin, Executive Director of Baltimore Orchard Project