



A Development and Management Plan For
**The Potomac Heritage
National Scenic Trail
In Virginia**

February 2006

Acknowledgements

The authors of this report gratefully acknowledge participation by and contributions from the ad hoc Virginia Potomac Heritage Trail Public Land Managers Committee in the production of this plan. This document is a collaborative effort initiated in summer 2005 in response to the growing awareness that agencies and partners responsible for planning, constructing and maintaining segments of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail in Virginia would benefit from guidelines that fostered continuity and consistency in the development and management of Trail segments. Members of the Committee included:

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Opportunities and A Vision

The Potomac River corridor is one of the most historically significant regions in the United States. Among other forms of recognition, Congress affirmed the significance of the River corridor in 1983 by designating a corridor for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (see Appendix A: National Trails System Act of 1968). One of only 24 national historic and scenic trails in the National Trails System, the Trail corridor designation offers communities in the Commonwealth of Virginia immense opportunities to enhance existing recreational amenities, leverage heritage tourism and economic benefits, expand non-motorized transportation networks, preserve natural areas, and create new and exciting educational and interpretive experiences as well as connections to places with related themes. The evolving Trail partnership includes the vision of a braided Trail network—a continuous route for hiking throughout the Trail corridor and multiple routes for bicycling, boating and cross-country skiing at various locations—and substantial assistance to Trail segment managers from volunteer citizens groups.

Management Challenges

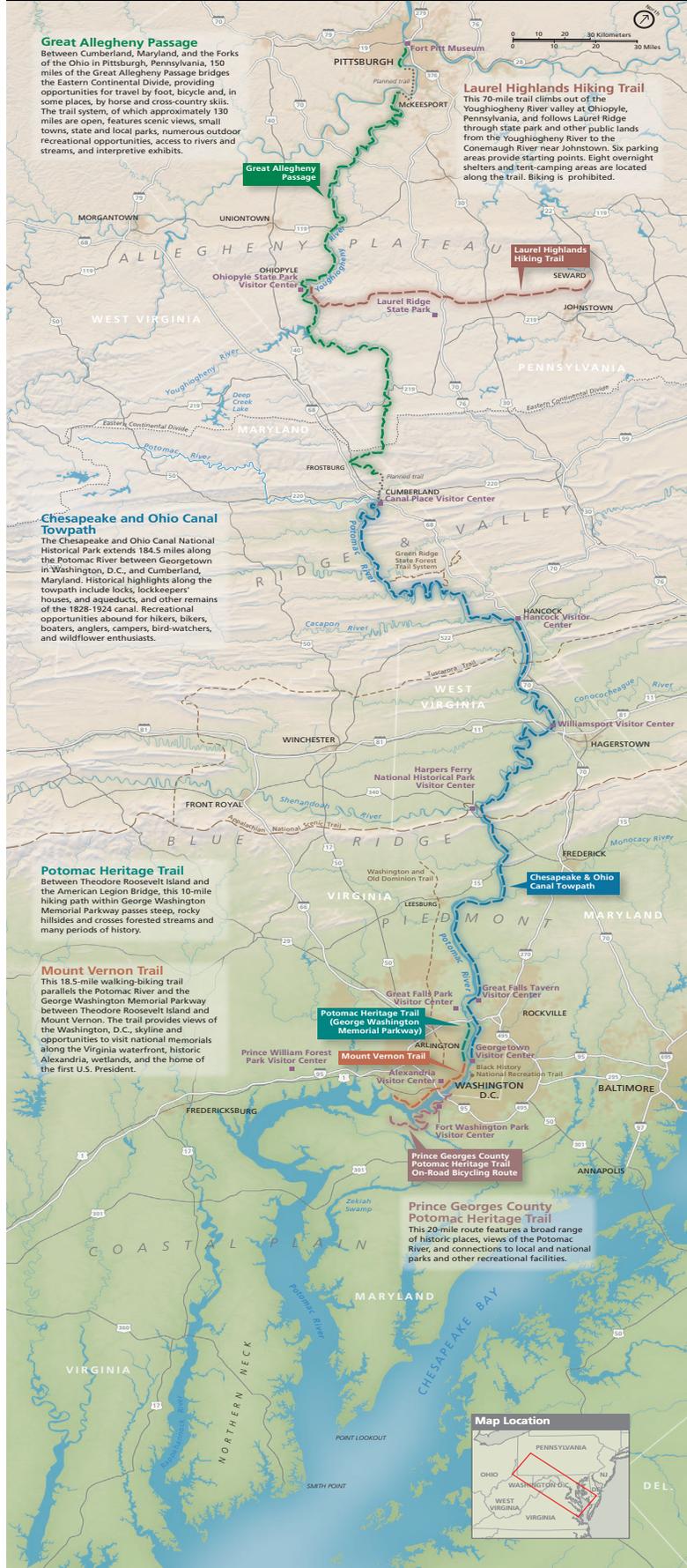
Even in the midst of a rapid transformation from rural to urban and suburban landscapes, much of the rich history and natural beauty of the Potomac River corridor in Virginia remains. In this

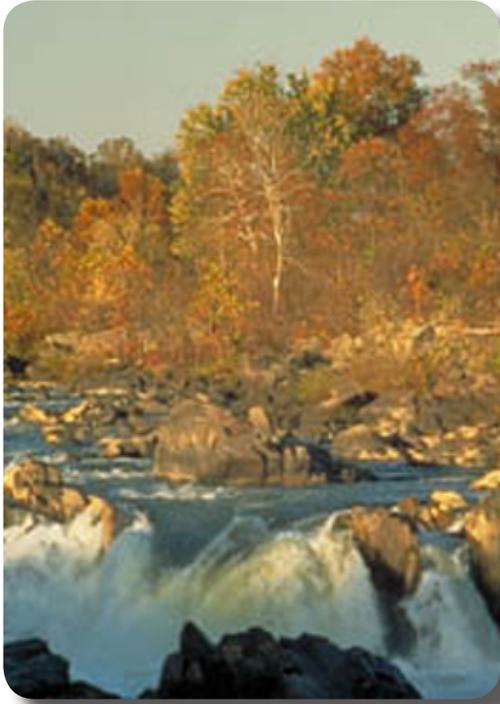
changing environment, however, the tasks of planning, constructing and maintaining segments of the Trail are challenging at best: Rapid development of rural landscapes and natural areas, combined with increasing demands for outdoor recreation, pose serious problems for local planners and elected officials.

Purpose of The Management Plan

This document - and the process used to arrive here - provide guidance for developing and managing segments of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The content is the result of collaboration among representatives of local, regional, state and federal government agencies, as well as from community and non-profit organizations. The objective of this planning process is to: a) document the principles agreed to by all manage partners; and b) provide a set of practical tools for use of the Trail corridor designation in development and management of a network of trails and related community resources as a world-class experience for residents and visitors. To these ends, the Plan identifies strategies to create a seamless user experience while recognizing the unique features and opportunities that exist within local trail environments. In addition, the Plan will evolve to address changing local circumstances and to incorporate the latest and best management practices.

Potomac Heritage Trail





The Significance of the Trail Corridor

Resources within the Potomac River corridor are outstanding. From a variety of perspectives—outdoor recreation, transportation, heritage tourism or natural area conservation—there are extraordinary opportunities to connect, enhance and support sites as diverse as George Washington’s Birthplace, Alexandria, the historic Patowmack Canal, the home of George Mason, and the Goose Creek Little Navigation Locks.

The PHNST also offers an exceptional opportunity to explore the character of five geographic regions, from the sandy beaches of the coastal plain to the crags of the Appalachian Mountains. In contrast to other trails in the National Trails System, landscapes and associated features within the Trail corridor vary from working farms and orchards to vineyards and agricultural museums, from tidewater marshes

and fishing weirs to stream valleys and forested ridges, from battlefields and cemeteries to quarries and parks.

Similar to other regions of the Trail corridor, the Trail in Virginia is becoming a network of multiple trail experiences and trail routes for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, and paddling. The “braided” nature of the PHNST will enhance the users ability to explore the Potomac corridor in a variety of ways and experiences. As local plans are developed and implemented, the Trail partnership offers opportunities to enhance the value and experience of local resources through connections—thematically, physically and administratively—among local trail networks and resources.

Investments in the Trail

An assessment of existing and planned Trail segments, conducted in 2004/05, revealed extensive investments as well as additional needs for funds and for volunteer assistance: Some form of planning for the Trail was an active project of each local jurisdiction and/or regional planning organization within the Trail corridor. In addition, participants in the assessment identified approximately \$20 million in funding needs (not including any land acquisition funds), many opportunities for volunteers to assist with trail construction and maintenance, and significant opportunities to connect existing resources in a manner that helps to tell the story of the Potomac River corridor in Virginia.¹ (see Appendix C: *Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail: Needs Assessment: Commonwealth of Virginia: May 2005*)

¹ Enacted in late July 2005, federal transportation legislation for fiscal year 2006 and beyond included \$800,000 in funding for the Trail in Virginia.

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A common challenge for trail managers is balancing the needs of diverse trail user groups.

Managing Trail Resources

Through formal applications, local and state agencies may apply to the National Park Service, Department of the Interior (NPS), for federal designation of a trail as a segment of the PHNST if they meet a basic set of criteria (see Appendix K: “Guidelines for Developing an Application Requesting Designation of a Trail as a Segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.”)² While the agency has no authority or resources to manage such Trail segments, the NPS, through the Trail Office, can provide some financial and technical assistance for specific projects, as well as opportunities for coordination with other Trail partners. The following provides Trail segment managers with guidelines to take full advantage of the Trail partnership.

² Recognition for trails as segments of the PHNST on lands managed by the National Park Service and other federal agencies (e.g., the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, agencies of the Department of Defense, etc.) are addressed through formal plans developed and adopted for each land management unit (e.g., Great Falls Park and George Washington Memorial Parkway, Occoquan Bay National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Army Garrison Fort Belvoir, etc.)

A. Management Goals and Objectives

Goals

In general, PHNST partners seek to:

- encourage resource conservation that contributes to the identity and well-being of communities in the Trail corridor for present and future generations;
- establish a seamless Trail network and experience for Trails users, providing opportunities to learn about the significance of the natural, historical, and cultural resources in the Trail corridor and the relationships among them;
- encourage public involvement and leadership in development and management of the Trail and in conservation of the Trail corridor;
- have the PHNST recognized in all appropriate local comprehensive plans;
- foster opportunities for local business [owners and managers] to contribute to the Trail experience and sustainability of the associated resources; and
- coordinate management activities with other Trail partners to realize the following objectives.

Objectives

Conserve Heritage and Scenic Qualities: Routes should be adopted, managed and designated to include the most outstanding historical, cultural and scenic features within the Trail corridor. Designating a

route for the sake of convenience, at the expense of providing both a scenic and heritage experience, should be avoided. However, designation of an interim alignment that may not have the highest scenic and heritage value is acceptable to insure that a continuous corridor is available for trail use in the short term is acceptable. In all cases during the planning and construction of the trail careful analysis should be conducted on the impact that the construction will have on the natural, archeological and scenic resources within the trail alignment.

should promote a safe experience through good design, adequate maintenance, enforcement of rules and regulations, and promoting due diligence on the part of



Ensure Financial Stability: Funding for the planning, construction and maintenance of the PHNST will be derived from many sources. Trail partners—Trail segment managers, citizen groups, the Trail Administrator (i.e., NPS), and members of Congress—should ensure that the budget for the Department of the Interior is adequate to provide coordination and oversight over the long term. Non-profit organizations may be able to leverage public funds with private investments in the trail.

the trail user. In general, the principles associated with user responsibilities, design standards and maintenance should be followed to ensure a rewarding trail experience.

Encourage Design Standards: Trail segments do and will vary extensively in character and design, depending on the type of terrain and desired experience; segments will range from primitive with few amenities to multi-use or shared pathways constructed according to ADA guidelines.

Promote Safety: Trail segment managers

Generally, trail facilities constructed in Virginia with federal and/or state funds must meet minimum design guidelines adopted by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Some managing agencies have adopted trail construction standards as well. See Appendix E to ascertain which agencies have adopted trail standards.



The PHNST can serve as an important tool in helping interpret and preserve historic resources in the Potomac River corridor, such as the Goose Creek Canal locks pictured above.



For segments of the Trail that are on-road bike routes, a paved shoulder and good signage help promote safety.

detailed discussion of Trail design standards is addressed in Appendix D.

Bicycles and On-Road Routes:

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has published standards in the Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities, which elaborates on the AASHTO guidelines, and the Virginia Bicycle Facility Resource Guide, which addresses such topics as safety, education and bicycling techniques. Local governments and park agencies

General Design Considerations: The design of PHNST segments should facilitate safety and ease of use to:

- Ensure adequate trail widths and sight lines;
- Make sure the trail surface is adequate for the intended use;
- Avoid steep grades, and utilize switchbacks when necessary ;
- Ensure adequate distance between trail and adjacent foliage to eliminate possible contacts;
- Establish good signage to control the flow and speed of trail users;
- Minimize potential edge conflicts;
- Provide a visually appealing corridor with adequate buffer; and
- Develop a regular maintenance schedule.

can adopt more stringent guidelines, but minimum standards must be considered when constructing bicycle facilities in Virginia with state or federal funding.

Ensure Maintenance: A well-maintained trail is usually a safe trail. The better a trail is maintained, the more likely it is to be used, and well-used facilities provide a safer environment. Regular inspections should be conducted by the managing agency. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has outlined some routine tasks that a trail managing entity might consider conducting on a regular and extended basis.

Hiking, equestrian, mountain biking and water trail standards have been generally outlined by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation for state parks. Within the Trail corridor, Appendix E includes an inventory of localities and agencies that have adopted their own trail design standards. While not a mandatory requirement, “minimum” standards should be adopted by agencies that have yet to adopt their own trail standards. A more

Law Enforcement: The enforcement of laws will be governed by the jurisdiction and/or agency that manages the property in which the trail is located. Any special problems as they pertain to the PHNST will be addressed individually.

Develop Volunteer Support and Building Community: Volunteer and community-based organizations do and can play vital roles in promoting, maintaining and constructing trails. Such individuals and organizations assure that the Trail segment has local relevance and, in many instances, build political support

for the development and maintenance of Trail segments. Often, a volunteer or community-based group can take positions that a government agency cannot and can raise funds from sources not available to government entities. Friends groups, chambers of commerce and trail clubs can greatly expand the reach and activities of a government trail managing agency and can serve as excellent spokespersons for the trail in the community.

A volunteer policy will help direct the energies of these entities in a positive and appropriate manner, using volunteers to assist with the maintenance, construction or special events on the trail. Appendix D contains a list of agencies in Virginia with volunteer coordination guidelines;

for others, some considerations are listed below:

- Be patient and realistic with expectations -- volunteers are helping on their own time.
- Consider developing a certification program for volunteers, particularly if they are engaged in trail maintenance and construction; this will ensure proper use of equipment and adherence to accepted construction standards.
- Require the organization to purchase liability insurance.
- When forming partnerships with volunteer groups to host events (managed hikes, maintenance days, trail construction, etc.); develop a volunteer request form and agreement to formalize the process in which initiatives are managed and evaluated for effectiveness. (See Appendix G: Sample Agency - Volunteer Organization Agreement.)

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE TASKS	
Activity:	Interval
Security patrol	Daily
Clean comfort stations	Daily
Refuse removal	Weekly
Corridor Inspection - Clear/Replace culverts, drains, water control structures	Monthly or after storms
Vegetation control, grass	Weekly
Vegetation control, brush	As needed
Snow and debris removal	As needed
Minor repairs and tread maintenance	As needed
Landscaping at trailhead	As needed
Recover from dumping and vandalism	As needed
LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE TASKS	
Activity:	Interval
Repaint blazes and pavement markings	Every 3-5 yrs., or as needed
Repaint structures	Every 5-10 yrs., or as needed
Renovate structures	Ever 10-20 yrs., or as needed
Regrade/resurface trail/parking area	Every 5-10 yrs., or as needed
Professional Inspections (bridges, tunnels)	Every 5-10 yrs., or as needed
Edge inspections (fences, gates, markers)	Semi-annually
Install/repair signs	As needed
Install/repair lighting	As needed
Install/maintain emergency systems	As needed
Update kiosk	As needed
Maintain road/railroad crossings (bollards, gates, warning devices)	As needed

(Source: 2000 Virginia Greenways and Trails Toolbox)

B. Roles and Responsibilities

The development and management of the PHNST in Virginia and the long-term value of the network, relies on communication, coordination and collaboration among many stakeholders: local, regional, state and federal government agencies; non-profit and community organizations; and private land owners. The following describes the various direct and associated management roles.

Trail Segment Managers

Public Agencies

Units of local government within the Trail corridor, including eight counties, two cities and four towns, have primary responsibility for use of the Trail concept to plan, design, construct and manage Trail segments that benefit residents and visitors. In most jurisdictions, federal, regional or state governments may also manage a segment of the Trail to



Volunteers can be very helpful in maintaining, constructing and advocating for trails in your community.

complement local government activities (see Appendix E: Table of Responses from a survey of land managers).

At the local level, management capability varies from fully-fledged park and recreation operations with hundreds of employees to jurisdictions that have no dedicated staff and minimal recreational facilities. In most jurisdictions management responsibilities will fall on more than one agency or department. Most commonly this includes a department of public works or transportation and a park and recreation agency.

Trail segment managers will:

- recognize the PHNST in local plans
- encourage proffers of lands and easements for Trail segments
- maintain Trail segments (including the integrity of crossings)
- install a Trail orientation exhibit (sign) indicating the Trail segment in the context of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
- seek opportunities for volunteers to assist with Trail maintenance and Trail-related events and educational programs
- coordinate Trail segment-related activities with other PHNST interests
- respond to inquiries about the Trail segment
- maintain the integrity of the corridor and minimize at-grade crossings

Private Land Owners

In some instances, private property owners or non-governmental organizations may be responsible for owning and managing segments of the PHT. Under these circumstances, private land owners will:

- maintain Trail segments
- install a Trail orientation exhibit (sign)

- indicating the Trail segment in the context of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
- seek opportunities for volunteers to assist with Trail maintenance and Trail-related events and educational programs
- coordinate Trail segment-related activities with other PHNST interests and evaluate opportunities to participate in regional planning processes



Representatives from local, regional, state, federal and community organizations meet annually at the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Caucus to discuss issues of mutual concern and importance.

Federal Trail Administrator

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Office, National Capital Region, National Park Service, Department of the Interior

The role of the Federal Trail Administrator includes:

- act as an advocate for and long-term steward of the Trail concept and network, including submission of requests for funds annually to help ensure adequate coordination, technical and financial assistance and public information;
- establish partnerships with and coordinate the efforts of numerous government and non-governmental organizations to facilitate the long-term sustainability of the resource]
- provide Trail segment managers with tangible copies of the Trail marker (i.e., logo) for use at trailheads and other major points of entry;
- provide a design and, with adequate funds, produce a trailhead orientation

- exhibit, describing the PHNST and the local trail as a segment of the PHNST
- provide annually, at minimum, opportunities for in-person meetings among Trail partners;
- provide periodic reports on the status of the Trail network and on Trail Office activities to all partners
- provide state and federal agencies and other partners with updated information on the status of the trail corridor, preferably in a GIS format

Commonwealth Agencies

The management of state-owned recreational lands in the Commonwealth most often falls under the direction of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation State Parks Division. However, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Virginia Department of Transportation may have jurisdiction over aspects of the PHNST as they relate to water trails and on-road trail components. Management of PHNST segments by the Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation will be primarily conducted

within state parks in a manner consistent with the park master plan and the policies established by each park management unit.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation



The Commonwealth of Virginia, and specifically the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, will include the PHNST in the Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) and provide related technical assistance. As stated in the 2002 VOP, “The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, through its Division of Planning and Recreation Resources, is the official state office to create and put into effect a long range plan for the acquisition...and development of a comprehensive system of outdoor recreation facilities.” The VADCR, through its role as the Commonwealth’s steward of the natural environment and recreational resources, will be an integral partner with the local, regional, federal and non-governmental organizations who will construct and manage the PHNST. VADCR recognizes the national significance of the PHNST and will support local and regional organizations with technical assistance in planning, promoting, constructing and managing the trail. (See Appendix H: Virginia Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan)

Regional Agencies

Two regional authorities may have some management role with the PHNST. They include the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and the Fredericksburg/Stafford Park Authority. Each is governed by an independent board and will manage the PHNST in accordance to their respective trail management guidelines and policies.

Although the three planning district commissions located within the corridor will not have any direct management authority associated with the trail, the PDCs often provide considerable technical assistance to local governments and can be, if necessary an important liaison in the development and implementation of future corridor wide guidelines.

Citizen Organizations

Volunteer-based citizen organizations may develop formal agreements with Trail segment managers to organize volunteers and events to assist with construction, maintenance and interpretation. (See sample agreement in Appendix G).

Trail Users

The trail user also has an obligation to ensure his or her own safety. Following the guidelines below will help to ensure an enjoyable and safe experience of a Trail segment:

- Be courteous and use common sense on the trail;
- When bicycling, travel at speeds appropriate to trail conditions and slow down to pass;
- Stay to the right and pass on the left. Bicyclist should use an audible warning when passing and yield to pedestrians.
- Pedestrians and bicyclist should yield to horses.
- Move off of the trail when stopped, but respect adjacent private property;
- Always wear a helmet when bicycling;
- Try to use the trail with a companion;
- Tell someone when and where you are going on the trail;
- Do not use the trail after dark;

- Always stop before crossing roadways;

Users should also seek opportunities to assist Trail segment managing agencies and private landowners as an individual or through a volunteer organization.

Developers

Property owners who develop land along the trail corridor should follow the guidelines spelled out in the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan and work with land managers to enhance the appeal of the trail corridor.

Signs, literally and symbolically, link people to places. In the context of this plan, signs provide a means to recognize trails as segments of the PHNST, to provide trail users with assurance that they are following a desired route, and to provide information that helps to understand associated Trail resources and encourage sustainable uses.

Trailhead Orientation and Gateways

Major trailheads for segments for the Trail will feature an “orientation exhibit,” including text to indicate that the trail is a segment of the PHNST, a map to indicate the geographic location of the segment in the Trail corridor, and the Trail marker. Such informational exhibits may be associated with interpretive facilities (e.g., visitor centers, museums, other educational facilities, etc.).

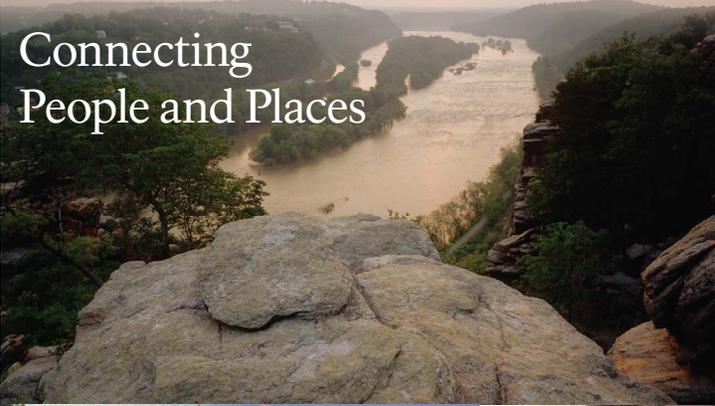
Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia

You are following a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, an evolving network that includes the C&O Canal Towpath. An enterprise of many partners, the Trail celebrates the heritage of the Potomac and upper Ohio river basins and offers opportunities for hiking, bicycling, boating, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing.



Connecting People and Places







Enjoy scenic vistas from the Laurel Highlands to the mouth of the Potomac.
Step back in time along the C&O Canal.

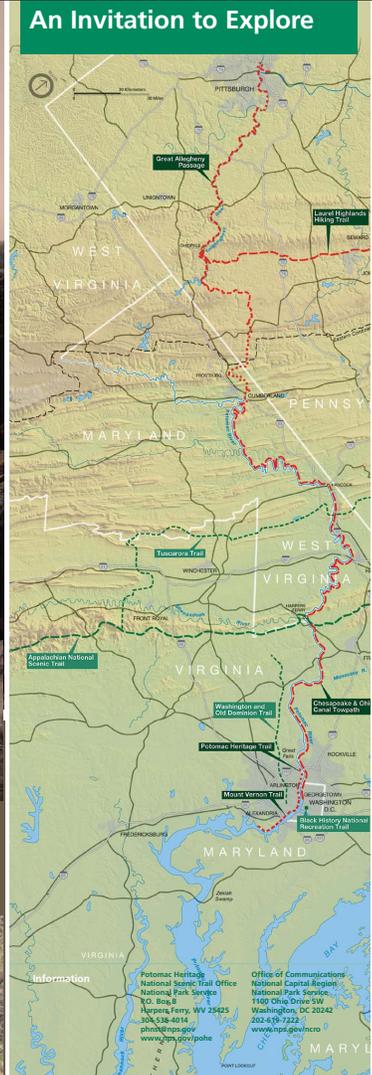
Visit the region's numerous historic homes
Tour the monuments and neighborhoods in the Nation's capital.

Explore the Potomac and its many tributaries in a kayak or canoe.
Or simply enjoy a day in the sun on foot or horseback.





An Invitation to Explore



Information

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 8
Hagerstown, WV 25525
304-538-4014
phn@nps.gov
www.nps.gov/phn

Office of Communications
National Capital Region
National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive SW
Washington, DC 20542
202-619-7222
www.nps.gov/ncro

Route Marking, Graphic Identity and Public Information

Chapter IV

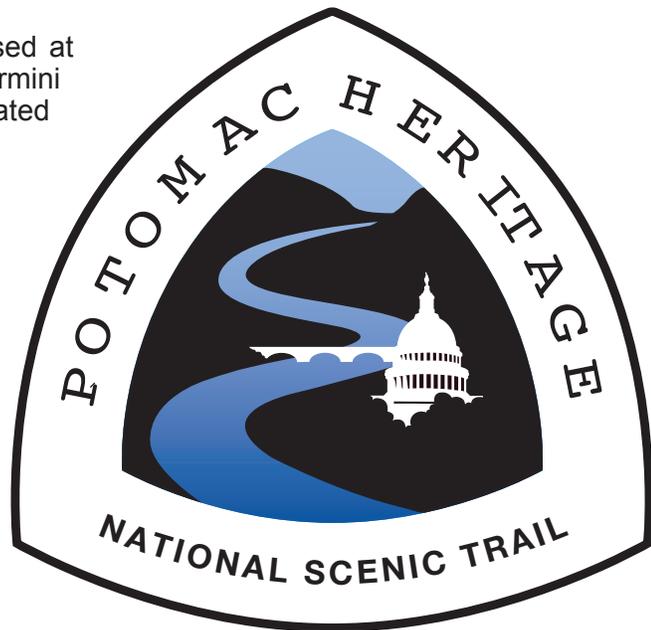


Method of Marking the Trail

Segments of the Trail will be marked in a manner acceptable to the trail manager and the NPS Trail Administrator in order to provide users with a reasonable measure of confidence that they are following a Trail segment.

Use of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Marker (Logo)

The Trail marker (logo) will be used at major trailheads, including at the termini of each trail segment, and in related publications.



Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits will be used to enhance the experience of the Trail corridor by creating an opportunity for users to make intellectual and emotional connections resources in the Trail corridor through understanding the significance of the local resource in a national context. Wayside exhibits should be situated off the main trail to minimize conflicts with other trail users.

WASHINGTON AT TURKEYFOOT

Seeking out the French

George Washington camped here on May 20, 1754. He was seeking for the British a navigable water route to the Forks of the Ohio (Pittsburgh), where the French were building Fort Duquesne. The young Lieutenant Colonel from Virginia had orders to proceed to the mouth of Redstone Creek (Brownsville), wait for reinforcements, then strike the French.

After canoeing to the formidable falls at Ohiopyle, he turned back and marched his troops westward over the mountain.

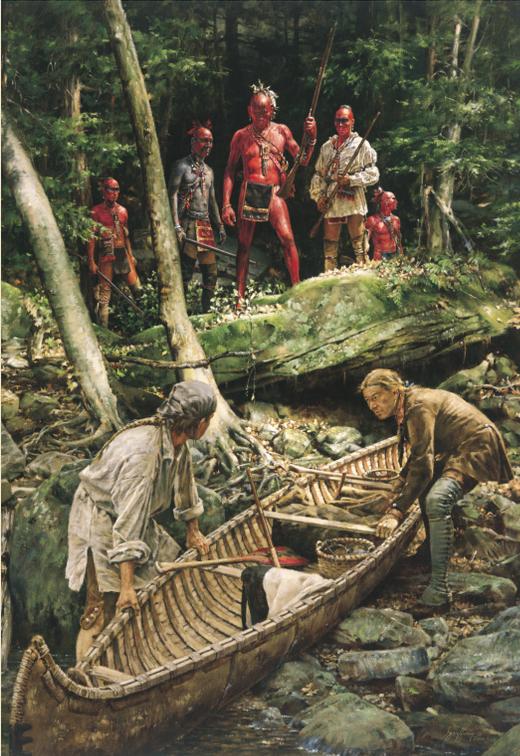
Indian scouts told him of a nearby French party. Washington's men ambushed and killed Ensign Coulon de Jumonville and nine of his men. This brief skirmish on May 28, 1754, at what is now Jumonville Glen, opened the French and Indian War.

From Washington's Diary May, 1754
"The 20th.... we gained Turkey-foot, by the Beginning of the Night. We underwent several Difficulties about eight or ten Miles from thence, though of no great Consequence, finding the Waters sometimes deep enough for Canoes to pass, and at other times more shallow."

"The 21st, Tarry'd there some Time to examine the Place, which we found very convenient to build a Fort, not only because it was generally but also for its being at the Mouth of three Branches of small Rivers... We went down the River about ten Miles, when at last it became so rapid as to oblige us to come ashore."

SPONSORED BY:

- Allegheny Trail Alliance
- Ohiopyle State Park
- National Park Service

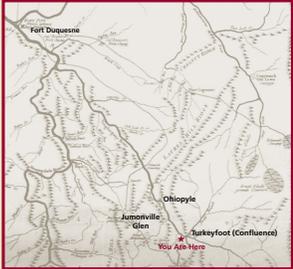


Exploring the wilderness by canoe was dangerous in the 18th-century.



Washington as Colonel of the Virginia Regiment, 1772.
By Charles Willson Peale

Washington's portrait in 1772 recalls his part as a colonial officer in the war against the French fifteen years earlier. He wears the uniform of the First Virginia regiment, and the metal gorget around his neck asserts his role as a colonel. The portrait was done just before the American Revolution, but reminds us that Washington had once fought loyally for the King of England.



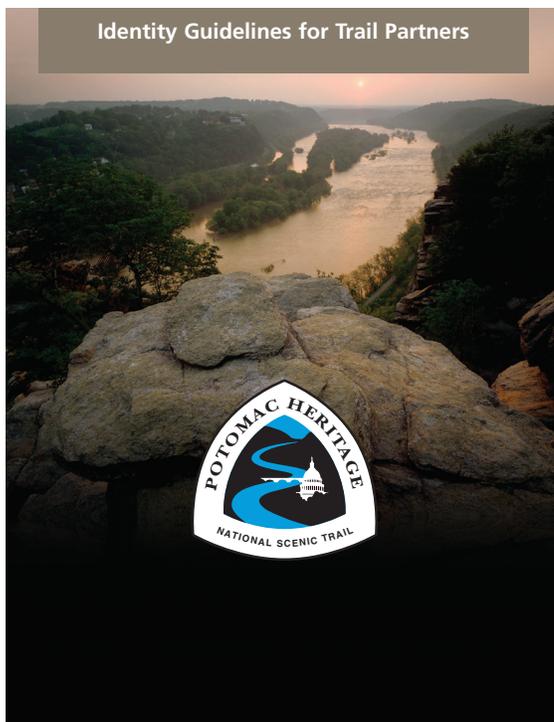
Map of Pennsylvania, 1776. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

This example of a wayside exhibit placed near Confluence depicts a very good design, with well placed graphics and text that is informative, well written and brief. For more information and technical resources consult the Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service, website at: <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/waysides/>

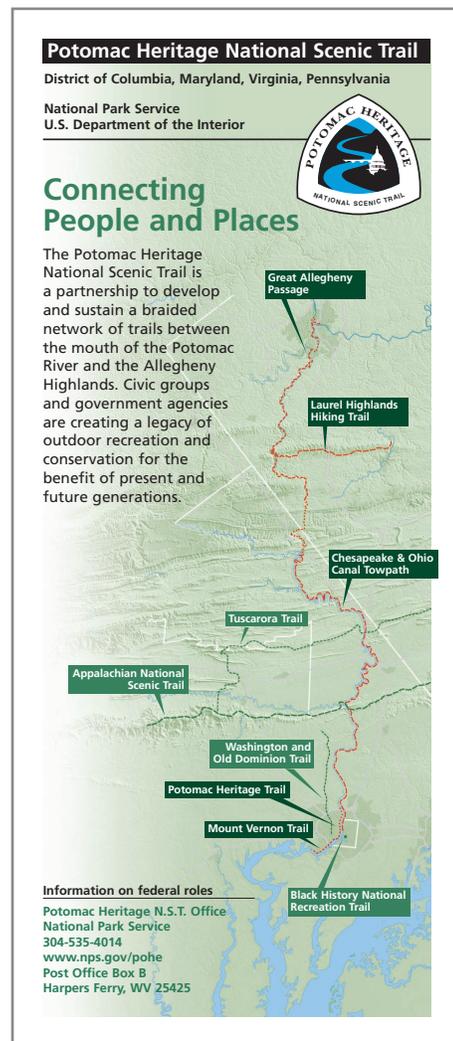
Publications

The NPS folder for the Trail will be revised as needed to indicate designated segments of the Trail, designated “side” and “connecting” trails, and other trails recognized as components of the National Trails System (i.e., the Appalachian NST, Tuscarora Trail, National Recreation Trails). The Trail segment manager will also publish, with NPS assistance, a map and/or guide to the trail.

As indicated in the interpretive concept plan for the Trail, the NPS should assist Trail managers with the development of regional folders to indicate the primary interpretive facilities associated with the Trail segment (e.g., Northern Neck/Fredericksburg area & Northern Virginia).



The NPS publication, *Identity Guidelines for Trail Partners: Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail* (2006), provides a template for publishing a two-sided “rack card” describing the Trail segment.



An example of a rack card.

Other Public Information

- The NPS web page for the Trail will provide links to the web sites of Trail segment managers.
- "Passport stamps" for the Trail will be available at staffed visitor facilities along segments of the Trail. Responses to requests to the NPS Trail Office for information on the Trail will note such locations.

For more information on the above, see *Identity Guidelines for Trail Partners: Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (2006)*.

Potomac Trace

Journeys to the places and stories of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail corridor from the Bay to the Allegheny Highlands

Issue No. 2

See the PHT this Spring

Two Events: from Point Lookout to Pittsburgh

If you have about a week in May and one in June, you can travel a good portion of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail corridor by bicycle on trips sponsored by PHT partners. The first will cover the area between Fort Washington Park, south of D.C., and the mouth of the Potomac. The second will begin in Washington, D.C., pass through the Allegheny Mountains, and end in Pittsburgh, Penn.

The journey south, May 13-17, is the Inaugural Tour of the Tidewater Potomac Heritage Bicycle Route. Sponsored by the Orono Hill Bicycle and Trail Club and the Potomac Heritage Trail Association, the ride goes from Fort Washington to Point Lookout on a portion of Adventure Cycling Association's Tidewater Potomac Heritage Route. The tour begins at 11:30 AM at Fort Washington National Park, with a celebration to recognize designation of the Prince George's County Potomac Heritage On-Road Bicycle Route as a segment of the PHT. After remarks and refreshments, the tour departs for a 42-mile ride to Bel Air.

From there, the route travels rural back roads and byways through farmland and



As the Potomac River nears the Chesapeake Bay, modest rivers open to mile-wide tidal passages. Enjoy Southern Maryland's scenery on the Tidewater Potomac Heritage Bicycle Tour.

small towns. The tour averages about 41 miles a day, a fairly leisurely clip even for novice cyclists. The pace leaves plenty of time for stops along the way and for exploring the region at the end of the ride each day. The Tidewater Potomac is where the middle Colonies began. Remarkably, there are long stretches of marsh grasses and brackish streams that seem untouched by the intervening centuries.

The journey north from Washington continues the story of westward expansion. Departing June 11 from Mile 0 of the C&O Canal National Historic Park, the annual Yockotamac Trek is hosted by the Allegheny Trail Alliance. It's a 325-mile, traffic-free trip traveling the length of the towpath and the Great Allegheny Passage,

or "GAP" which was designated a segment of the PHT in 2004.

The itinerary promises 74 historic canal lock structures, passage through three tunnels, scenic vistas and intimate contact with both the Potomac and Youghiogheny rivers. There is even a ride on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad from Cumberland to Frostburg. But more than the scenery and the sites along the way, the trip offers a rare chance to experience the PHT's continuity, to imagine events of long ago that, once faded, have left these trails to be enjoyed. The trail's gentle grade allows you to take in the surroundings, so your imagination is challenged as much as your muscles.

Nonetheless, you'll be hungry for food and fun each evening. The Yockotamac's veteran trip planners will show the way to local eateries and watering holes, followed by stays at B&B's near the trail.

For both trips, the itineraries make it possible to join the group at any point along the way.



Yockotamac Trek

The Route
A bicycle ride from Washington to Pittsburgh on the C&O Canal Towpath and the Great Allegheny Passage.

When
June 11-19

Highlights
Easy riding along the Potomac and Youghiogheny below cliffs and mountains, punctuated with the spectacular views from Mt. Savage Tunnel.

Information
www.ataall.org



The Allegheny Trail Alliance built a public-private partnership that secured more than \$12 million to restore the Big Savage Tunnel for the Great Allegheny Passage. The tunnel will open when the trail is completed from Cumberland to Meyersdale.

Tidewater Potomac Heritage Tour

The Route
Adventure Cycling's Tidewater Potomac Heritage Route from Fort Washington to Point Lookout.

When
May 13-17

Highlights
Wide vistas of the Potomac and its tributaries, sunsets on the water, quiet back roads through farmland.

Information
www.ochbno.org

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The *Potomac Trace* is one example of a publication that highlights stories about places and people within the trail corridor.

The National Park Service's official website for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail can be found at:
<http://www.nps.gov/pohe/index.htm>

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