

Identity Guidelines for Trail Partners



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Finding the Way, Enjoying the Journey

Employing a system of graphic identity will establish recognition for distinctive, individually-managed trails as segments of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Common design and narrative statements can help to connect people with the national significance of the Trail network.

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST or the Trail) is a developing network of outdoor recreation pathways that celebrate the natural and cultural history—and continuing evolution—of lands and waterways between the Chesapeake Bay and the Allegheny Highlands and the Forks of the Ohio. Segments of the Trail network are managed by local, regional, state and federal agencies and, in some cases, by private organizations; they do and will vary by length.

For use by Trail managers and interpreters, these guidelines are a “toolkit” to provide some measure of continuity among various segments of the Trail network. By providing consistent design elements and Trail corridor-wide interpretive themes, managers of Trail segments are empowered to tell local and regional stories in a national context; while various trails are managed to provide broader opportunities and purposes than the PHNST, each management partner maintains some association with and contributes to the Trail. By developing some continuity in design and narrative along the corridor, these guidelines enhance the benefits of that association: They help to create an identity that embraces all Trail segments while encouraging local distinctiveness. The guidelines do not supplant existing design and interpretive schemes employed by Trail segment partners, and each will engage local planners, writers, and designers and produce signs and exhibits that best fit their needs and budgets. But the guidelines do provide a coordinated approach to PHNST identity and to wayfinding between Trail segments.

At present the guidelines include:

The Trail insignia (i.e., logo)

Standard text for printed communications

Trailhead orientation signs

“Wayside” interpretive exhibits

Design template for one kind of publication

Examples of publication and sign types

As the Trail network and its identity grow, these guidelines will be refined and amended.

Interpretive Themes

A primary “interpretive theme” reflects the Trail network as a whole, while at least one of the supporting themes represent each existing and planning Trail segment in the Trail corridor:

Primary Interpretive Theme:

Restoration, Recreation, and Sustainability

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail is a partnership to develop and sustain a system of trails for recreation, transportation, health, and education between the mouth of the Potomac River and the Allegheny Highlands. The Trail is a national meeting ground of ideas and practices, reflecting a desire for the conservation of lands and waters, for educational opportunities combined with outdoor recreation, and for a celebration of regional diversity and distinctiveness.

Supporting Interpretive Themes:

Natural History and Diversity

Between the Chesapeake Bay and the Allegheny Highlands, the Trail corridor includes portions of five distinct physiographic regions. Each region, in different ways, has inspired and shaped hundreds of human generations with beauty, abundance, and utility.

Boundary, Corridor and Crossroads

As a boundary between north and south and an east to west route into the North American interior, the Potomac River has been a crossroads of opportunity, diversity, and conflict.

Nation-Building / Nurturing A Nation

Routes connecting the Potomac River with the Forks of the Ohio provided an essential context for the development of the United States.

The following sections take us along a path toward the establishment of a graphic identity among the various Trail segments.

Trail Insignia

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Insignia

The Trail insignia (or logo) is a Federal mark used to identify segments of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.



The Trail logo, as published in the **Federal Register**, is the official Trail insignia.* With written permission from the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Administrator, the Trail logo may be used as a trail marker; on signs; and in printed and electronic media such as brochures, guides, maps and websites. Use of the Trail logo provides visual continuity and functions as the primary vehicle symbolizing an institutional relationship between the Trail network and an individual Trail segment, between the management entity for a Trail segment and the Trail Administrator, and between the entire Trail enterprise and the National Trails System.

* The design of the Trail insignia is part of a family of insignia for national historic and national scenic trails within the National Trails System. Authorities for development and use of the Trail insignia (or logo) can be found in the National Trails System Act of 1968 (as amended), 16 U.S.C. 124(a) and 1246(c) and in Protection of Official Badges, Insignia, etc. in 18 U.S.C. 701.

Trail Insignia

The Trail insignia (or logo) is a Federal mark used to identify segments of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.

One-color



Two-color



Gradient Two-color



These versions are provided on the compact disk included with this document in several formats. The insignia may not be altered in any way.

Trail Identity in Publications

Welcome to the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail

The 70-mile Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail stretches through wilderness along Laurel Mountain between the picturesque Youghiogheny River at Chisopyle and the Coppersuch Spring near Johnsons. The trail is recognized as a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, a developing network of trails through five distinct natural regions between the mouth of the Potomac River and the Allegheny Highlands. Like other regions in the Potomac Heritage Trail corridor, the trail is evidence of a strong desire to conserve lands for outdoor recreation and education.

Each season brings excitement. In early April, spring wildflowers dot the forest floor followed by a vibrant green forest in late April. In June, mountain laurel blooms followed by rhododendron in late June and early July. Come mid-October the park is in a blaze of glory with fall foliage. Winter brings spectacular snowfalls and opportunities for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

The wilderness nature of the park harbors a diversity of wildlife. In early spring, salamanders, frogs and toads lay their eggs in vernal pools. In summer, listen for the flute-like call of the wood thrush. Watch the sky for hawks and eagles using the thermals of the Laurel Ridge throughout the year and particularly in the fall when they migrate south. Winter is a great time to look for animal tracks. Tracks often reveal fascinating wildlife stories.

Please follow the Seven Leave No Trace Principles to make your adventure more enjoyable while minimizing your impacts to this area.

Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know the conditions and special concerns for the area you will visit.
- Don't underestimate the trail or overestimate your abilities.
- Prepare for adverse weather, hazards and emergencies. The Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail experience includes season weather changes. Check the local weather forecast before departing.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow. Camping is only permitted in the shelter areas and permits are mandatory.
- Walk single file in the middle of the trail, cross when wet or muddy.
- Use rubber or wide treading on trail surfaces and to steps made to avoid injury.

Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Impact your campsite and rest areas for food or spilled liquids. Pick up all trash, leftover food and items.
- To wash yourself or dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter soiled water.

Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed wildlife. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors and exposes them to predation and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing odors and food properly.

Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past. Restore but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings.

Using cell phones to place calls for assistance to guide personnel is for emergency only. Non-emergency requests will result in a fee charged.

The aim of these guidelines is to maintain a visual connection throughout the Trail network while encouraging local flexibility and identity. There are two essential elements for publications associated with the Trail: use of the Trail insignia; and use of standard descriptive text about the Trail.

The most frequent use of the Trail logo in publications will likely be in brochures and trail maps. Because the Trail is most accurately described as a “route,” “network” or “partnership” that fosters connections between and among trails managed by many jurisdictions, the Trail logo will most likely, and appropriately, appear with the logos of other agencies and trails.

Along with the Trail logo, the following text should be adapted to recognize a trail as a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail:

The [name of trail] is a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. An enterprise of many partners, the evolving Trail network celebrates the heritage of the Potomac and upper Ohio river basins and offers opportunities for hiking, bicycling, boating, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing.

Publications produced with financial and/or technical support of the Trail Office, National Park Service, should include the following:

This publication was produced with support from the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Office, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names of commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the United States Government.

The preceding paragraphs need not appear adjacent to each other.

Sites on the World Wide Web should follow a similar approach. Web site managers should contact the Trail Administrator for approval to use the Trail logo.

Using the Trail Insignia as an Orientation Marker

The PHNST is an extensive network of locally-managed trails. Each Trail segment will be marked in a manner acceptable to the Trail segment manager and the Trail Administrator in order to provide users with a reasonable measure of confidence that they are following a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Trail markers, in the shape of a “pregnant triangle,” are available in three sizes: 3 1/2-inch and 9-inch plastic versions with pre-drilled holes for nails or screws; and a 3-inch decal (for use on commonly-available plastic, stand-alone posts).



Literally and symbolically, signs link people to places. At minimum, they enable safe journeys and enrich the experience of travel. At their best, they enlarge our perspectives and deepen our appreciation of our heritage. Use of the Trail insignia helps to achieve all of these ends.



Trail markers should be used at major trailheads, and especially at the termini of each Trail segment; they may also be used at trail junctions to indicate the Trail route. To indicate a formal relationship between a trail and PHNST network, the insignia should appear proximate to other wayfinding signage associated with the trail.

Imagine, for example, that the PHNST network includes the Misty Hollow Trail through a local park and that wayfinding signs or blazes mark the route of the Misty Hollow Trail. At the trailhead, the PHNST insignia will appear in association with the wayfinding signs for the Misty Hollow Trail. At trailheads, the trail manager may use a 3-inch or 9-inch plastic marker (or a trailhead orientation exhibit—see section IV). All are available from the Trail Administrator and recognized as Federal marks, with uses authorized by the Trail Administrator.

Trail Identity

Continuing with this example, let's imagine that, within the park, the Misty Hollow Trail comes to a junction with the High Knob Trail, another segment of the PHNST network. At this point, one of the two smaller versions of the Trail marker should be used to indicate the Trail route (in both directions, of course). Following the High Knob Trail, the Trail marker will appear at the next junction or at the termini of the High Knob Trail; the High Knob Trail will be marked according to a method determined by the manager of such trail (e.g., particular color of blaze or a logo unique to the trail.)

In addition, if the trail is marked (e.g., with blazes), managers are encouraged to employ a method (e.g., blaze color, shape, etc.) that reflects local needs, policy and management plans and that complements the landscape. This practice will preserve the scenery, historic landscapes and local identity while fulfilling the vision of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail as a “braided” trail system. To foster a visual connection with the Trail logo, managers might consider something in a shade of blue or blue/purple used in the gradient version of the Trail logo.

The preceding circumstances presumes little or no use of accompanying text at a trailhead. If trail managers wish to describe briefly the relationship between the Trail segment and the larger Trail network, the following should be used:

You are following a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, an evolving network that includes the [insert name of trail]. 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.

Trailhead Orientation

Orientation Signs at Trailheads and Gateways

Orientation signs use images and text to provide a geographical and management context to a particular location along the Trail. After viewing a Trail orientation sign (or “exhibit”), travelers should comprehend their general location and understand that they are following a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.

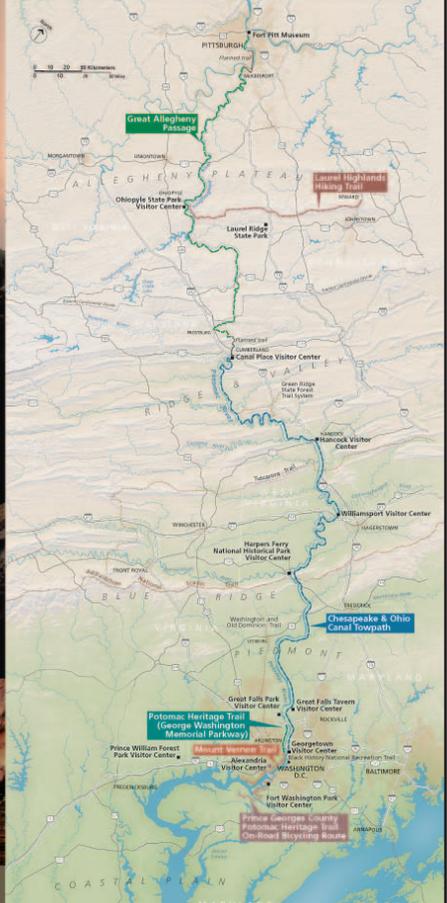
Trailheads and “gateways” are major points-of-entry for travelers using segments of the Trail network.

- Gateways are major gathering points associated with visitor centers, museums and other educational or recreational facilities.
- Trailheads are recreational entry points distinct from other facilities and typically include parking or a connection to public transit and information about the site. They might also include restroom facilities and water.

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.

Visit the region's numerous historic homes and sites.

Explore the Potomac and its many tributaries in a kayak or canoe.

Trailhead Orientation

Most trailheads and gateways are developed for parks and trails with an identity apart from the Trail network. PHNST orientation signs will establish a physical and conceptual link between specific trailheads (and Trail segments) and the Trail network. Most often, this connection will be accomplished with a two-part display: one panel (or bulletin board) depicting the local area—what might be seen or experienced, outstanding features, and safety information; and a second panel displaying the entire Trail corridor. Generally, orientation signs do not serve an interpretive function. A standard Trail orientation exhibit should include:

- the Trail insignia;
- a map to indicate the geographic location of the segment in the context of the entire Trail corridor;
- a standard narrative statement to inform the traveler that the trail they are following is a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail; and
- a reference to obtain more information about the PHT.

The preceding example, included with these guidelines, was designed according to NPS standards and measures 36 inches square. If scenery is paramount or space and/or budgets (for the trail manager and PHNST Administrator) are limited, trail managers may choose to establish an identity with the Trail network through use of a template for a bulletin board sign, with or without a companion map of the Trail corridor; such signs (laminated, 5 by 8 inches, with the Trail logo) are available from the Trail Administrator (example below).

Potomac Heritage Trail

River Bend Park
Fairfax County Park Authority

Potomac Heritage
National Scenic Trail

Connecting People and Places

The Potomac Heritage Trail in River Bend Park is a segment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. An enterprise of many partners, the evolving Trail network celebrates the heritage of the Potomac and upper Ohio river basins and offers opportunities for hiking, bicycling, boating, horseback riding and cross-country skiing.



More information

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River Bend Park
Fairfax County Park Authority
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/riverbend>
703-759-9018

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Interpretive Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits help to tell the story of a particular place and to enhance the traveling experience by creating a connection between the traveler and specific local features.

Wayside exhibits create intellectual and emotional connections between people and the landscape. They help people understand what they are seeing. For the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, wayside exhibits can provide “continuity of experience” by making thematic connections among disparate sites. While tailored to specific places, such exhibits can help to explain the national significance of the Trail corridor.

Transportation history, for example, is an important theme along the Trail. One can imagine site-specific interpretation associated with the canal era (C&O Canal and the Patowmack Canal), railroad history (Great Allegheny Passage), the steamship era (Southern Maryland and Virginia’s lower Potomac region) and the age automobile parkways (trails along the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Fort Circle Parks Trail). And there are others, such as bateaus on the upper Potomac and seafaring ships on the lower Potomac.

Wayside exhibits related to the Trail should explore Trail-related themes; in most instances, exhibits will be able to evoke a connection to other regions of the Trail corridor and to understand the significance of the local resource in a trail-wide context.

In addition to the general themes described in the Introduction, use of the following themes and sub-themes will help to create interpretive continuity among all Trail segments:

Transportation: describes how a waterway or road played a role in moving goods and people

Birth and Growth of the Nation: the quest to reach the Forks of Ohio and the westward expansion of the Nation

Working Lands and Waters: landscape-based economies through time, such as fishing, farming and forestry

Industrial Heritage: the economic evolution over time, and how the evolution has affected the natural values of the landscape

Recreation Heritage: how people have used the lands and waters of the corridor for leisure and enjoyment

Natural Heritage: unique, distinctive and nationally significant natural features

Conservation Heritage: efforts to preserve the lands, waters and culture resources of the trail corridor

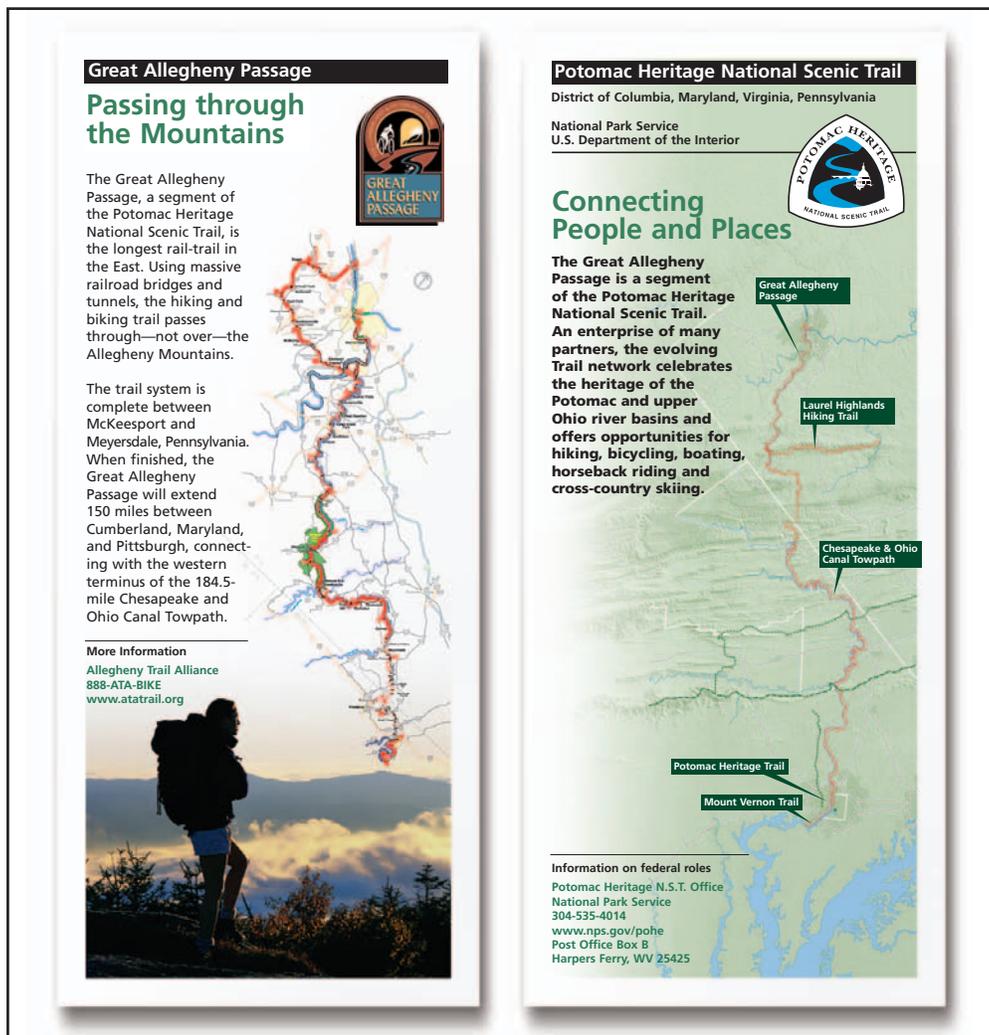
Extensive information on wayside exhibit planning, design and production, is available on the web site maintained by the Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service: <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/waysides/index.htm>.

Publishing a "Rack" Card

Designed to fit in a brochure rack, these cards inform readers about the existence and location of Trail segments and of an association with the Trail network. They are used for public education and not for site-specific user information.

Rack cards are a relatively inexpensive way to print and distribute information about a Trail segment and the Trail network. Placed at visitor centers or museums, for example, rack cards will explain local connections to the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. At public events and visitor centers away from Trail segments, they invite visitation and public participation. With a minimal initial investment, rack cards can be easily updated.

The rack card is 3.75 inches wide by 8.5 inches tall, printed on both sides. Side A of the card contains information about the Trail segment and standard text about the trail as segment of the PHNST; optional elements include a map or illustration. Side B features a map of the PHNST corridor (see example).



Finding a Way Out of the Woods

Trail partners are encouraged to consult with the Trail administrator and/or with a design professional. Either might be able to assist with professional writing, editing and graphic design. In addition, agencies and organizations that manage Trail segments might also request assistance from the Trail Office to produce a brochure based on designs used for National Park Service publications; one common template, for example, is two-sided, 8.5 inches by 14 inches, with text on one side and a map on the reverse. The Prince Georges County Potomac Heritage Trail On-Road Bicycling Route brochure, available from the Trail Office and other locations, is one example: With the Trail logo displayed prominently in the top right corner of side A, a “More Information” section provides an opportunity to recognize multiple partners and to present a “shared identity” for the trail.

Resources:

Companion compact disk, provided with this set of guidelines, that includes:

- the Trail insignia (logo) in a variety of formats
- example of a trailhead orientation sign (for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Towpath)
- example of a rack card
- bulletin board sign template

Trail Administrator:

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Web site for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail: www.nps.gov/pohe
(where changes and additions to these guidelines may be found under “Management Documents”)

Web site for Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service: www.nps.gov/hfc
(for information on planning for and producing wayside exhibits; contractors used by the National Park Service; and more)

Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service, U.S. D.O.I., *National Scenic and National Historic Trails: Wayside Exhibit Guidelines: The ABC's of Planning, Design, and Fabrication* (March 1998)

Web site for the National Trails System Act of 1968 (as amended):
<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/nts/legislation.html>
(including the reference to the use of Trail insignia)