

Potomac Heritage Trail

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail
District of Columbia/Maryland/
Pennsylvania/Virginia



Connecting People and Places

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, one of twenty-five national historic and scenic trails in the National Trails System, is a partnership to develop and maintain a network of locally-managed trails for recreation, education, transportation and health between the Chesapeake Bay and the Allegheny Highlands.

Blending Outdoor Recreation and Educational Opportunities

Combining outdoor recreation with educational opportunities, local investments in the Potomac Heritage Trail are creating connections that illustrate the national significance of the Trail corridor. Legislation for the Trail, a 1983 amendment to the National Trails System Act of 1968, assigns responsibilities for development and management of Trail segments outside of federally-managed lands to local and state agencies and precludes the designation of Trail segments in the State of West Virginia. The National Park Service is responsible for administration of the Trail corridor designation and assists various Trail interests with coordination and with some technical and funding support.

Sixteen trails are currently recognized as segments of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail:

- ♦ the 184.5-mile Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Towpath;
- ♦ the 18.5-mile Mount Vernon Trail and the 10-mile Potomac Heritage Trail in George Washington Memorial Parkway;
- ♦ the 70-mile Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail; and
- ♦ the 150-mile Great Allegheny Passage (connecting Cumberland, Md., and Pittsburgh, Penn.);
- ♦ the 27-mile Potomac Heritage Trail On-Road Bicycling Route in Prince Georges County, Md.;
- ♦ a two-mile route in Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area, Charles County, Md.;

- ♦ a 4.5-mile route in Prince William Forest Park;
- ♦ 7.7 miles of trails within Riverbend Park, Great Falls Park and Scott's Run Nature Preserve in northern Fairfax County, Vir.;
- ♦ a 15-mile linear park system in eastern Loudoun County, Vir.;
- ♦ the 23-mile Alexandria Heritage Trail in Alexandria, Vir.; and
- ♦ the two-mile Government Island Trail, Aquia Creek Water Trail, and planned 5-mile Historic Falmouth-Ferry Farm Trail in Stafford County, Vir.

Other trails—proposed segments of the National Scenic Trail—contribute to the concept, including:

- ♦ bicycling routes in southern Maryland and on the Northern Neck (Virginia);
- ♦ Potomac Heritage Trail projects in the Northern Virginia counties of Prince William, Fairfax and Loudoun;
- ♦ the Potomac River Water Trail, a National Recreation Trail; and
- ♦ the planned Fort Circle Parks Trail and the heritage trail network in the District of Columbia.

Books, maps and guides related to the Trail can be purchased through Eastern National, a National Park Service cooperating association, at www.eparks.com, and a hiking guide to the Trail network is available at www.potomactrace.org or www.atatrail.org.

More Information

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