

# Potomac Trail – In the Footsteps of George Washington

For a wonderfully scenic and historically significant travel destination, consider visiting the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, located on the east coast of the United States. This breathtakingly beautiful scenic trail makes its way through four different states – Washington D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. In geographical terms, the trail links the Potomac with the upper Ohio River basins. It follows many of the same paths that were explored by one of America's greatest patriots and the first president of the United States, George Washington.

Today, these paths can be followed not only on foot, but on horse, bicycle, and even in a boat. While on this scenic trail, visitors will be able to explore the varied landscapes of the Allegheny Highlands and the Chesapeake Bay.



A few different examples of interesting historical sites along the Potomac Heritage Trail include the historic Alexandria Heritage Trail in Alexandria, Virginia, George Washington's historic estate at Mount Vernon, and the Fort Circle Parks Trail (part of Washington D.C.'s Civil War defense system) in Washington D.C. The Alexandria Heritage Trail is great for experiencing an area of the country that was well-inhabited by founding fathers and other proponents of the United States' fight for independence in the late 1700's. Mount Vernon, George Washington's estate, is a fantastic historical place to visit. The Fort Circle Parks Trail in D.C. is an interesting historical destination to be found along the Potomac Heritage Trail, since it offers its visitors firsthand insights into the Civil War, and its impact on America and her people.

This trail, along with its maintenance and jurisdiction, fall under the administration of the National Parks Service. As a result, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail is kept in pristine condition. In addition to being well-kept, the trail offers its travelers many of the same amenities and features that can be found in other National Parks around the country. These include well-maintained camping areas, visitors stations and information posts, and the safety and protection offered by the National Parks Service federal police force that are charged with watching over and policing all of the country's National Park lands.



With regard to the total length of the trail, visitors can get ready for approximately 830 miles, which include both already existing trail, as well as parts of the trail that have been planned for creation by the National Parks Service, but have not yet been constructed. The trail's overall breadth spans across two major U.S. watersheds, in addition to spanning five different geographical provinces that lie in between the mouth of the Potomac River and the Forks of the Ohio trail terminus in Pittsburgh, PA. The entire area encompassed by this scenic trail is sprawling, and really quite vast relative to the respective areas of many other National Park lands.

When it comes to the fees and reservations associated with spending time on the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, not all facilities along the trail corridor actually charge a fee for visitors to enter, which can be great for travelers on a budget. The facilities that do charge fees along the trail include isolated parks, certain historical sites, and designated camping areas. One example of an NPS facility along the trail's corridor that requires reservations in advance to use are the shelters that are perched along the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail. To reserve one of these shelters, or any other specific facility that requires a reservation in advance, simply consult a Trail Management Partner (NPS affiliate) for more information.



The activities and things to do available along the Potomac trail are widely varying. Some examples of activities that people tend to do while traveling or visiting this famous historic trail include hiking, boating, horseback riding, bird watching, visiting historic sites, bicycling, running, cross-country skiing, and rock climbing. These are just some of the things to do; there are many more options for activities along this vast and far-reaching National Scenic Trail.

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