



MAP & GUIDE

A Hiking & Bicycle Path

GABRIELSON TRAIL



BE OUR GUEST

TRAIL ETIQUETTE

These forested lands protect the water quality of our Potomac River drinking water supply and provide critical habitat for countless plants and animals, some considered globally rare. Please respect the environment, its inhabitants and private property owners. You can help! Stay on the trail, carry out trash and obey leash and cleanup laws. This shared-use trail is open to foot and equestrian traffic only.

TRAIL SAFETY

This unimproved trail is remote, narrow and moderately strenuous in places. It may be slippery when wet and low areas are muddy year round. The swiftly flowing river can be dangerous; access only at designated park locations. Please note: cell phones may have limited reception on this route. Dress appropriately and hike or ride with a friend. **CALL 911 IN AN EMERGENCY.**

TRAIL ACCESS

Gabrielson Trail is accessible at Algonkian Regional Park in Sterling, from Riverbend Park or at Rte.602 Seneca Road in Great Falls. Please enter at these park sites or from adjacent trails only. This trail may also be accessed by through hikers continuing on the PHNST. Services are limited on this route- please plan your visit accordingly.



photos shown here by Mark Okada

DEDICATION

Dr. Ira Gabrielson served as the first chairman of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority from 1959 to 1976. A notable field biologist and ornithologist, he is recognized as one of the 20th century's great conservation pioneers. In the late 1950's he realized the Potomac River and its tributary streams required protection as vital water supplies and as environmental, historic and recreational assets. This led to the assemblage of over 8,000 acres of parkland on the Potomac River, Bull Run, and the Occoquan Reservoir.

During his extensive career, he served many agencies in many capacities: as Commissioner of the first Virginia Outdoors Plan; as first Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Wildlife Refuge System; as President and Chairman of the Wildlife Management Institute and as President and Trustee of the World Wildlife Fund.



photo by Don Bliggs

WELCOME!

Situated along the headlands of the spectacular Potomac River Gorge, the Gabrielson Trail links over 1,500 acres of Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority lands with other protected lands along the mighty Potomac River.

Retrace ancient paths through pristine natural areas on foot or horseback. The Gabrielson Trail contributes a twelve mile segment to the long distance Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and links to other nearby trails, parks and attractions, including Great Falls National Park, Riverbend Park and the Nature Conservancy's Fraser Preserve.

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

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TRAIL ROUTE

PATOWMACK LAKES SPORTSPLEX

Loudoun County's 47-acre athletic complex offers four lighted softball fields, six soccer fields, a playground, pavilion and concession stand. It hosts athletic contests from March- November and numerous local, state, regional and national tournaments each year. Open seasonally; limited public facilities. Cascades Parkway, North. 703-444-1459.

LOWES ISLAND

A private golf club, Lowes Island is the home of two championship golf courses located on 465 rolling acres along the Potomac River. Gabrielson Trail follows Old Sugatland Run through this site. Courses are open seasonally; no public facilities. 20391 Lowes Island Blvd., Sterling, VA 20165. 703 444-4801.

SENECA TRACT

The 466-acre Seneca Tract of the Upper Potomac Parklands is dominated by mature deciduous forests, its steep uplands incised by spring-fed streams destined for the Potomac River. A network of natural surface bridle and hiking trails traverse the tract to the riverfront and the Potomac Heritage Trail. Native birds, flowers and wildlife thrive in their home environment. Open daily dawn to dusk; no services or facilities. Seneca Road, Great Falls, VA.

FRASER PRESERVE

A gift to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), 100 species of birds, 300 varieties of wildflowers, numerous amphibians and mammals have been documented in the 220-acre nature preserve. 2.25 miles of hiking trails pass cold-spring swamps and ponds through old fields and meadows. TNC and Calvary Baptist Church share the common goal of maintaining the Fraser Preserve in its natural state. Open daily dawn to dusk; no services or facilities. Springvale Road, Great Falls, VA. 434-295-6106.

UPPER POTOMAC PROPERTIES

Envisioned as a 1000-acre park on the Potomac Palisades, riverfront parcels acquired by NVRPA in the late 1960's through the 1980's began to form the Upper Potomac Park recreation and conservation complex. Though never fully realized, the nearly 800 acres of parkland remain today, displaying habitat once typical to Virginia's Piedmont region. Open daily dawn to dusk; no services or facilities. Access at Seneca Road or at Riverbend Park Great Falls, VA. 703-779-9372.

RIVERBEND PARK

The eastern terminus of Gabrielson Trail adjoins Riverbend Park. A visitor and nature center offer public facilities, parking and trail connections to the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and Great Falls National Park. Shore fishing, boat launch and rentals, picnic areas, trails and nature programs are open to all ages. Open daily; hours vary. 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls, VA. 703-759-9018.

GREAT FALLS NATIONAL PARK

Largest and most powerful of all Potomac River falls, Great Falls provides unparalleled sights and sounds of the mighty river as it plunges seventy-six feet. Relics of George Washington's Patowmack Canal are featured on 15 miles of hiking, bridle and biking trails. A visitor center, guided walks and picnic facilities are available year round. Connections to PHNST/Difficult Run/Cross County Trail. Open daily; parking fee. 9200 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, VA. 703-285-2965.

POTOMAC HERITAGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL (PHNST)

Gabrielson Trail is one of many segments of The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, a developing 704-mile, multi-use trail. The PHNST traces the natural and human history of the Potomac River Basin on a network of trails within Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia. Multiple access points; hours, services and facilities vary by location.

CROSS COUNTY TRAIL

The Fairfax County Cross County Trail (CCT) within Difficult Run Stream Valley joins the PHNST at Great Falls National Park. A 40-mile route, the CCT runs north-south between the Potomac and the Occoquan Rivers. Access at Georgetown Pike, or at Great Falls National Park. Open year round; limited facilities. 703-324-8741.

