### 1 POWER PLANS

Cansidered a perfect spot for a coal-fired, steam generated power plant, PEPCO officials acquired 500 acres of riverfront here in the 1950's. Ultimately, a site in Dickerson, MD was selected instead and PEPCO developed an employee recreational facility on this site, later purchased by NVRPA to become Algonkian Regional Park.

# 2 LOWES ISLAND

Lowes Island is named after John Lowe, who acquired it in 1839. Part of the early and extensive McCarty Sugarland Tract holdings, the island is part of the broad fertile bottomlands forming the widest section of floodplain along the entire length of the Potomac above the Tidewater.

### 3 OLD SUGARLAND RUN

The Rangers of the Pottomack scouted "the suggar land" while patrolling this frontier in September 1692. Robert Beverly wrote in 1705 that the sweet sap of the sugar maple trees along the stream had been "... known among the Indians longer than any now can remember."

### 4 McCARTY LAND GRANT

In 1709, Captain Daniel McCarty obtained 2,993 acres in the first grant to land above Great Falls, in what is now Loudoun County. A colonial politician and owner of large tobacco plantations on the lower Potomac, McCarty never farmed, improved or lived on this riverfront property, which eventually stretched from Sugarland Run to Broad Run.

### 5 FORDING THE POTOMAC

During the Civil War, General J.E.B. Stuart's Confederate cavalry troops forded the Potomac River a few days before the Battle of Gettysburg. On the night of June 27, 1863, they crossed from Virginia into Maryland at Rowser's Ford near Seneca Creek, cutting between Union troops and Washington and disrupting on important Federal supply line on the C & O Canal.

### **6** PATOWMACK CANAL

Organized in 1785, with George Washington as its president, the Patowmack Company was an interstate waterway, carrying goods between Cumberland, Maryland and Georgetown to the Chesapeake Bay. In 1790, the Seneca Bypass was one of the first operational canals routing boats around the 5 falls of the Potomac River. Dropping seven feet over its course, it avoided almost a mile of rapids. Remnant walls testify to the durability of this early engineering marvel.

### **7** WATER MILLS

In 18th and 19th century Virginia, mills were powered by water from creeks, streams and rivers. Millraces, millponds and rubble remain as landmarks to the numerous grist mills and sawmills in this region. Built and operated by local farmers, grain and timber was processed and shipped by river boat or on rough hewn roads to markets in Georgetown. Alexandria and beyond.

### 8 RIVER CAMPS

For more than 10,000 years, the lands along the Potomac River were occupied by generations of Native Americans for seasonal hunting and fishing camps.

City-dwellers and farmers alike built rustic fishing cabins here in the late 1800's, as rural vacation retreats became popular.

### 9 FISH WEIRS

Native Americans used stones to construct fish weirs in the meanders of the Potomac River. These weirs provided a very efficient way to trap the fish which run during the spring and autumn. Remnants of these triangular-shaped structures can still be found in the river today.



### ALGONKIAN SANCTUARY TRAIL

This 2-mile loop trail traverses more than 30 acres of "created" wetlands, meadow and forests near Lowe's Island. Planned for habitat diversification, this man-made environment allows visitors to observe an evolving ecosystem in a unique setting.

# VERNAL POOLS AND PONDS

Low-lying riverside forests and fields retain floodwaters in ponds and pools critical to wildlife, including spotted salamanders, green tree frogs and turtles. Resident and migrating birds, like the indigo bunting and Baltimore oriole, depend on these habitats for breeding, feeding, and raising young.

# SUGAR MAPLES

Typically a "cold dimate" tree, the sugar maple can become established on north-facing slopes near the river's cool waters. Micro- dimates exist where special conditions such as these ollow certain species to survive in areas where they're not normally found.

# SENECA BREAKS

One of the five falls of the Potomac River, the "Seneca Breaks" are remnants of the Metagraywacke rock formations common to this area. Over time, the riverbed's rocks were worn down by the flow of water. Resistant rock outcroppings, ledges, and boulders remain prominent above the waterline.

# A NICHOLS RUN

Protected by undisturbed forest, Nichols Run remains one of the most pristine watersheds in Fairfax County today. Along with Jefferson Branch, it provides an outstanding wetland complex, home to several protected plant and animal species, including purple fringeless orchids and wood turtles.

### A ISLANDS OF THE POTOMAC

The geology of this region affects the character of the Potomac River over its 383-mile course. From Harper's Ferry, West Virginia to Little Falls, Virginia, the water cuts rocky islets in the river. Downstream, suspended rock particles are deposited as soft gravel islands. These Island ecosystems support many globally rare natural communities.

# BIRDS OF PREY

Hawks, falcons, owls and bald eagles soar high above the river, hunting small birds, mammals, or fish to eat. The turkey and black vultures circle the sky mornings and afternoon scavenging for carrion before returning to their high treetops and rocky roosts.

# **★** WATERWAYS

Thousands of fresh water tributaries feed into the Potomac River. Upland seeps, springs, and streams far away nurture larger tributaries such as Clarks Branch, Jefferson Branch and Sugarland Run, which are crossed by Gabrielson trail.





CROSS COUNTY TRAIL F P

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.

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.

GREAT FALLS NATIONAL PARK F. P. 2 [W] [H]
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.

TRAIL ROUTE

BE OUR GUEST

TRAIL ETIQUETTE

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



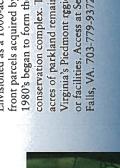












Envisioned as a 1000-acre park on the Potomac Palisades, riverfront parcels acquired by NVRPA in the late 1960's through the 1980's began to form the Upper Potomac Park recreation and conservation complex. Though never fully realized, the nearly 800 acres of parkland remain today, displaying habitat 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. UPPER POTOMAC PROPERTIES Envisioned as a 1000-acre park on the l

accessed by through hikers continuing

also be

on the PHNST. Services are limited on this route-

please plan your visit accordingly.

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.

Gabrielson Trail is accessible at Algonkian Regional Park in Sterling, from Riverbend Park or at Rte.602

**FRAIL ACCESS** 

Seneca Road in Great Falls. Please enter at these

park sites or from adjacent trails only. This trail

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 Sugarland Run through this site. Courses are open seasonally; no public facilities. 20391 Lowes Island Blvd., Sterling, VA 20165. 703 444-4801.

ALGONKIAN REGIONAL PARK To To This 850-acre park on the Potomac River shoreline is the western terminus of Gabrielson Trail. A former PEPCO employee recreation area, visitors today enjoy the swimming pool and aquatics complex "Downpour," a par-72 golf course, miniature golf, trails, a boat launch, picnic shelters, vacation cottages, and versatile meeting center. Open year round. 47001 Fairway Drive, Sterling, VA 20165. 703-450-4655. PATOWMACK LAKES SPORTSPLEX P M HE 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 rournaments each year. Open seasonally, limited public facilities. Cascades Parkway, North. 703-444-1459.

These forested lands protect the water quality of our

Potomac River drinking water supply and provide

trash and obey leash and cleanup laws. This shared-

owners. You can help! Stay on the trail, carry out

environment, its inhabitants and private property

some considered globally rare. Please respect the

critical habitat for countless plants and animals,

use trail is open to foot and equestrian traffic only.

TRAIL SAFETY

SENECA TRACT Z P

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 t dusk; no services or facilities. Seneca Road, Great Falls, VA.

Dress appropriately and hike or ride with a friend. CALL 911 IN AN EMERGENCY.

only at designated park locations. Please note: cell

phones may have limited reception on this route.

The swiftly flowing river can be dangerous; access

when wet and low areas are muddy year round.

moderately strenuous in places. It may be slippery

This unimproved trail is remote, narrow and

and Trustee of the World Wildlife Fund

# GABRIELSON TRAIL

MAP & GUIDE

A Hiking & Bridle Path







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a versatile mix of opportunities.

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Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

Park, Riverbend Park and the Nature Conserand attractions, including Great Falls National

vancy's Fraser Preserve.

areas on foot or horseback. The Gabrielson Retrace ancient paths through pristine natural

long distance Potomac Heritage National Sce-Trail contributes a twelve mile segment to the

Trail and links to other nearby trails, parks

Bull Run, and the Occoquan Reservoir.

8,000 acres of parkland on the Potomac River,

supplies and as environmental, historic and recretributary streams required protection as vital water

This led to the assemblage of over

ational assets.

tected lands along the mighty Potomac River. Regional Park Authority lands with other prolinks over 1,500 acres of Northern Virginia Potomac River Gorge, the Gabrielson Trail

century's great conservation pioneers. In the late 1950's he realized the Potomac River and its

ornithologist, he is recognized as one of the 20th from 1959 to 1976. A notable field biologist and the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

Dr. Ira Gabrielson served as the first chairman of

DEDICATION

Situated along the headlands of the spectacular

WELCOME!

photo by: Don Brigg: