



Strategic Partnership Plan for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail 2022–2027

VIRGINIA • DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA • MARYLAND • PENNSYLVANIA



January 2022

This page intentionally blank.

CONTENTS

I.	Executive Summary	1
A.	Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Purpose Statement	1
B.	Partnership Mission Statement	1
C.	Vision Statement	1
II.	Background	1
III.	Process	2
IV.	Mission and Vision Statements	5
A.	Mission	5
B.	Vision.....	6
V.	Goals, Strategies, and Actions.....	6
A.	Connectivity.....	7
B.	Branding, Marketing, Wayfinding, and Signage	7
C.	Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Visitor Impacts	8
D.	Partnership Structure.....	9
E.	Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities	9
VI.	Implementation	10
A.	Accountability	10
Appendix A:	Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Implementation Plan	11
Connectivity	11	
Branding, Marketing, Signs.....	13	
Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Impacts	16	
Partnership Structure	18	
Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities.....	21	
Appendix B:	Workshop Attendees	25
Appendix C:	Leadership Team and Implementation Teams	27
Leadership Team.....	27	
Connectivity Team	27	
Branding, Marketing, and Signs Team	28	
Visitor Use Management and Experience Team	28	
Partnership Structure Team	29	
Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient COMMUNITIES Team	29	

TABLES

Table 1. Connectivity Goals and Strategic Actions	7
Table 2. Branding, Marketing, Wayfinding, and Signage Goals and Strategic Actions	7
Table 3. Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Visitor Impacts Goals and Strategic Actions...	8
Table 4. Partnership Structure Goals and Strategic Actions	9
Table 5. Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities Goals and Strategic Actions.....	9

POTOMAC HERITAGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PLAN, 2022–2027

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Strategic Partnership Plan identifies a joint vision statement, shared goals, and key strategies and actions that National Park Service (NPS) staff and partners agree upon to improve collaboration through a focus on discrete and time-bound goals and actions that provide a roadmap to success. This strategic partnership plan will inform annual work plans and combined efforts for all organizations involved. The strategic partnership plan was prepared by an interdisciplinary team and regional NPS staff with assistance from the Denver Service Center.

A. Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Purpose Statement

Legislation for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (the trail) provides a means to establish a trail corridor network between the mouth of the Potomac River to the Allegheny Highlands and Upper Youghiogheny River Basin and offer—through partnerships among agencies, nonprofit organizations, and citizen groups—exceptional recreation and education experiences rich with opportunities to learn about geography, ecology, history, and diversity.

B. Partnership Mission Statement

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail partners collaborate to protect, manage, promote, and advocate for a network of trails and sites that share the diverse stories and places within the historic corridor between the mouth of the Potomac River to the Allegheny Highlands and Upper Youghiogheny River Basin. By supporting each other trail partners provide safe and equitable access to the trail and connect communities and visitors with outstanding outdoor recreation experiences.

C. Vision Statement

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail partners promote and amplify a well-maintained and effectively managed trail. The partners support and share the legacy of the corridor and scenic landscapes between the mouth of the Potomac River to the Allegheny Highlands and Upper Youghiogheny River Basin, protecting it for all to enjoy.

II. BACKGROUND

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail is a developing network of locally managed land and water trails, between the mouth of the Potomac River and the Allegheny Highlands. In 1983, Congress passed an amendment to the National Trails System Act of 1968, designating the trail as a component of the national trails system. The designated trail corridor consists of portions of five regions with distinct physical features and landscapes in three states and the District of Columbia, as well as 20 other administrative units of the national park system. Although there are gaps in the trail, partners are continuing to work to close those gaps and create a continuous, 929-mile trail. Currently, approximately 822 miles exist. Additional mileage may be added as future water trails are designated.

The 1983 amendment to the National Trails System Act authorizes the designation of trail “segments” outside the boundaries of federally managed lands through formal agreements. The trail combines outdoor recreation with educational opportunities in a “braided” network of locally managed trails that intersect and diverge. This network provides the opportunity to promote different kinds of nonmotorized experiences, including hiking, bicycling, fishing, backpacking, camping, horseback riding, paddling, and cross-country skiing. The trail also incorporates accessibility by aspiring to provide opportunities for equitable access for all visitors.

As the population along the trail corridor increases and land uses change, the trail designation provides an institutional framework—for communities, volunteers, government agencies at all levels, nonprofit organizations, and business interests—to provide for the conservation and development of outstanding education and outdoor recreation experiences along various trail segments. Increasingly, outdoor recreation opportunities such as the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail are recognized as important contributors to local, regional, state, and national economies as well as being important components of healthy communities. Residents and visitors are also able to explore a variety of diverse historic and natural landscapes and stories within the trail corridor.

III. PROCESS

The 2014 *Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Foundation Document* identified the need for a partnership and communication strategy. In 2020, the NPS team, Denver Service Center Planning Division, and the National Capital Area team (Lands and Planning and the Rivers, Trail, and Conservation Assistance Program), initiated a strategic partnership planning process. The NPS team identified partners (land agencies and organizations) who had existing and recently expired agreements (regional trail segment agreements as well as cooperative and task agreements) to participate in the partnership planning process. Other stakeholders (e.g., advocacy and community organizations) will be briefed and included in the implementation process. Partners for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail include:

Virginia

- Arlington County
- City of Alexandria
- City of Fredericksburg
- Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail
- Fairfax County Park Authority
- Fairfax County Department of Transportation
- George Washington’s Mount Vernon*
- George Washington Regional Commission
- King George County
- Loudoun County
- Northern Neck Planning District Commission

- Northern Virginia Regional Commission
- Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority
- Prince William County
- Stafford County
- Town of Dumfries*
- Town of Leesburg*
- Town of Occoquan*
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources
- Virginia Department of Transportation
- Virginia Tourism Corporation
- Woodlawn & Pope Leighey House (National Trust for Historic Preservation)

Maryland

- Accokeek Foundation
- Alice Ferguson Foundation
- Board of Garrett County Commissioners*
- Charles County*
- Conservancy of Broad Creek
- Garrett Trails, Inc.*
- Leonardtown*
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Maryland Indian Tourism Association
- Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George’s County
- Maryland State Highway Administration*
- Mountain Maryland Trails*
- Prince George’s County
- St. Mary’s County
- Southern Maryland Heritage Area
- Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

Pennsylvania

- Great Allegheny Passage Conservancy
- Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- Somerset County Rails to Trails Association*

District of Columbia

- District Department of Transportation

Federal Agencies

- Bureau of Land Management, Douglas Point Special Management Recreation Area*
- Bureau of Land Management, Meadowood Special Recreation Area*
- Department of Defense, Fort Belvoir
- National Capital Planning Commission
- National Park Service:
 - Appalachian National Scenic Trail*
 - Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail*
 - Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park
 - Civil War Defenses of Washington
 - Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park
 - George Washington Memorial Parkway
 - George Washington's Birthplace National Monument*
 - Harper's Ferry National Historical Park,* sections in Virginia and Maryland only
 - National Capital Parks, East
 - National Mall and Memorial Parks*
 - Prince William Forest Park
 - Rock Creek Park
 - Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail*
 - Thomas Stone National Historic Site*
 - Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail*
- US Fish and Wildlife Service—Potomac River Complex

* Denotes Partners who were unable to participate in the strategic partnership planning process.

The planning process began with an online survey sent to all partners and NPS staff to better understand potential strengths, opportunities, challenges, and vision for the plan.

The National Park Service held a two-hour webinar in August 2020 and another in September 2020 to introduce the strategic planning process to partners who have agreements with the trail. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NPS team was unable to travel to the National Capital Area or host an in-person workshop. As an alternative, the National Park Service hosted a virtual workshop via Microsoft Teams in December 2020 with trail partners. The workshop spanned four days over a two-week period, with two four-hour sessions each day. During the virtual meeting, participants developed a mission and vision statement for the strategic partnership plan based on existing partner mission statements, identified key areas of emphasis for the plan, determined goals, and agreed upon key actions that would guide partners to achieve the goals. These actions were scheduled for annual implementation.

Following the virtual workshop, the planning team, in coordination with the partners, developed an implementation plan and schedule of the most impactful action items for the strategic partnership plan. This work was followed by a three-hour meeting with the partners in May 2021 to complete the implementation plan. In addition, the team discussed and prioritized partner input to identify strategies and actions to achieve shared goals. These action items will guide the development of annual work plans. The planning team shared the draft strategic partnership plan with the National Capital Area team and partners for further input before finalizing the plan in summer 2021.

IV. MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

The mission and vision statements for the partnership and subsequent goals, strategies, and actions build upon existing mission statements from the National Park Service and each of the partner organizations. Common terms and phrases found across mission statements from the trail and partner organizations include:

- partnership
- recreation
- stewardship
- sustainability
- economy
- community

A. Mission

The mission statement articulates the focus of the partnership and the collective values of the trail partners:

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail partners collaborate to protect, manage, promote, and advocate to build and maintain a network of trails and sites that share the stories and places within the historic corridor between the mouth of the Potomac River to the Allegheny Highlands and Upper Youghiogheny River Basin. By supporting each other, trail partners provide safe and equitable access to the trail and connect communities and visitors with outstanding outdoor recreation experiences.

B. Vision

That vision statement articulates what the trail and its partners strive to achieve together in the next five years:

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail partners promote and amplify a well-maintained and effectively managed trail. The partners support and share the legacy of the corridor and scenic landscapes between the mouth of the Potomac River to the Allegheny Highlands and Upper Youghiogheny River Basin, protecting it for all to enjoy.

V. GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

Over the four-day planning workshop, participants developed goals and strategic actions and categorized them into five primary emphasis areas. The following goals describe the actions trail partners can take in the next five years and encourage partners to collectively address identified needs that will have the greatest impact. Goals and actions are nested under one of the five emphasis categories and provide tangible tasks on which partners can work together.

Connectivity focuses on coordinating to identify and close gaps along the trail. *Branding, marketing, wayfinding, and signage* focuses on a cohesive approach to communicate the importance of the trail. *Visitor use management, visitor experience, and visitor impacts* focuses on creating a welcoming and inclusive trail experience while building stewardship for the trail. *Partnership structure* focuses on bringing together partners, enhancing collaboration and communication, and creating a unified partnership. *Safety, infrastructure, and resilient communities* focuses on creating a unified approach for safety and infrastructure needs.

The following goals and strategic actions in each emphasis area will guide the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and partners in developing annual work plans for the next five years, ensuring that partners are working collaboratively and being held accountable to the partnership vision. Appendix A provides further details about implementation.

A. Connectivity

Table 1. Connectivity Goals and Strategic Actions

Goal	Strategy #1	Strategy #2	Strategy #3	Strategy #4
<p>#1: Identify Gaps: Develop a cohesive approach to identifying and mapping gaps in trail connectivity and potential strategies.</p>	<p>Create a geographic information system (GIS) working group to coordinate trail-wide mapping efforts. Identify additional partners and develop an internal partnership map.</p>	<p>Identify appropriate modes of transit to close gaps (i.e., closing on land or water—accessible by bike, foot, horse, or paddle). Identify stop points and transportation to the next portion of the route.</p>	<p>Develop agreements with railroads, utilities, and other rights-of-way owners (e.g., highway and river crossings) and work to improve connectivity along the trail.</p>	<p>Ensure that all desired routes are in local master plans and local comprehensive plans so that the trail is evaluated for capital improvement projects.</p>
<p>#2: Create a Network to Close Gaps: Build support among local officials, business leaders, transit providers, and educational institutions for trail connectivity. Develop a cohesive approach to identify gaps in connectivity.</p>	<p>Collaborate with government agencies (local, regional, state, and federal) and nonprofit organizations to renew and develop trail segment agreements along the trail.</p>	<p>Work with land conservancy and other national land trust/green space preservation organizations on land acquisition projects.</p>		

B. Branding, Marketing, Wayfinding, and Signage

Table 2. Branding, Marketing, Wayfinding, and Signage Goals and Strategic Actions

Goal	Strategy #1	Strategy #2	Strategy #3	Strategy #4
<p>#1: Make a Plan: Develop a marketing plan inclusive of identity and communication needs for use with external and philanthropic audiences.</p>	<p>Create a partner marketing and communication team (government and nonprofits) to oversee all branding and marketing efforts across the trail. Identify opportunities to incorporate the logo.</p>	<p>Develop a Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail communication and marketing plan.</p>		

Goal	Strategy #1	Strategy #2	Strategy #3	Strategy #4
#2: Break Down Barriers: Reduce barriers to information, awareness, and participation in trail-wide activities and experiences.	Conduct targeted listening sessions, roundtables, and public meetings. Serve as a conduit and contact for the community to continue to engage with future projects and initiatives.	Promote awareness of the trail and its designated trail segments by developing shared communication tools. Collect this information from listening sessions, roundtables, and public meetings.	Provide resources for visitors such as maps, itineraries, and trip-planning information to accommodate specific needs/interests for diverse user groups.	
#3: Find Your Way: Develop a unified wayfinding plan.	Form interagency and partner planning group to collaborate and develop a wayfinding and signage plan.			

C. Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Visitor Impacts

Table 3. Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Visitor Impacts Goals and Strategic Actions

Goal	Strategy #1	Strategy #2	Strategy #3	Strategy #4
#1: Welcome All: Create a welcoming and inclusive trail experience for all visitors along the entire corridor.	Host targeted listening sessions, roundtables, and public meetings. Serve as a conduit and contact for the community to continue to engage with on future projects and initiatives.	Improve the visitor experience by providing visitor services and improving trail conditions and related infrastructure to support visitor use throughout the trail.		
#2: Make a Difference: Engage volunteers in stewardship activities to support the trail.	Develop a unified, regional volunteer outreach strategy and tools to educate visitors and volunteers in stewardship activities.	Survey local groups for existing stewardship activities and opportunities to collaborate.	Establish programs for invasive plant management and plant revitalization using volunteers.	Create opportunities for trainings to advance the sustainability of trails.

D. Partnership Structure

Table 4. Partnership Structure Goals and Strategic Actions

Goal	Strategy #1	Strategy #2	Strategy #3	Strategy #4
<p>#1: Leverage Partnerships: Leverage government agencies (local, regional, state, and federal), tribes, friends groups and advocacy organizations, and environmental, outdoor recreation, and community nonprofit organizations in a unified partnership.</p>	Identify additional partners and develop a partnership map to show partners and plan how to work together.	Create a best a practices guidance document for partners to set a trail-wide standard for all projects and a trail-wide toolkit to prioritize trail-wide initiatives.	Establish a voice within counties where the team has identified gaps.	Develop partnerships with other trails that cross and align with the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Create a cohesive experience for visitors and improve public information about trail connectivity in the region.
<p>#2: Develop Strong Communication Tools: Create trail-wide initiatives for internal communication among partners, including developing a virtual toolkit and strong communication between partners.</p>	Define partnership roles and responsibilities to develop legacy of knowledge in support of the trail.	Conduct an annual roundtable meeting with the trail partners.	Create a SharePoint site or online platform as a virtual toolkit for internal resources, collaboration, and communication.	Create technical support documents, such as an infrastructure guideline and a continuous online map for trail section managers to use as a resource when developing projects.

E. Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities

Table 5. Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities Goals and Strategic Actions

Goal	Strategy #1	Strategy #2	Strategy #3	Strategy #4
<p>#1: Share Knowledge: Develop shared trail-wide standards for trail infrastructure, safety requirements, and sustainability</p>	Hold regular public safety roundtables and discussions on best practices.	Create shared standards and guidelines that allow partners to speak a common language around the trail, visitor use, and infrastructure. Consider the potential impact of trail use and new construction on existing historical resources and potential disturbance of archaeological resources.	Leverage existing programs for ongoing funding for safety and infrastructure.	Standardize sustainability and climate resiliency concepts and practices for all trail plans.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

This plan will be continually adjusted based on the needs of the partnerships and current conditions. Implementation timelines can be influenced by a range of variables, including budget, staffing, and unplanned opportunities. The strategic actions are broken into short-term, medium-term, and long-term action items to support the strategic actions for each of the five emphasis areas.

The partners will develop a leadership team to guide the overall implementation of the plan. This group will encourage communication and collaboration to each of the emphasis area groups, providing continuity for implementing actions along the corridor.

A. Accountability

Maintaining accountability is core to the strategic planning process and to successful partnerships. For this plan, accountability will focus on routine connections in which each team provides accomplishments, discusses barriers and needs, and communicates next steps. These connections will be scheduled at intervals that meet the needs of the partnership and ensure accountability for tasks and deliverables. This schedule will be determined at the initial kickoff meeting for the plan. A leadership team for the partnership organizations will also be established as part of this effort. The role of the leadership team is to support and convene the implementation teams for the purposes of accountability and implementation of the plan. Appendix C lists members of the leadership and the implementation teams at the time of publication.

APPENDIX A: POTOMAC HERITAGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Connectivity

Goal 1: Develop a Cohesive Approach to Identifying and Mapping Gaps in Connectivity and Potential Strategies.

Table A-1. Connectivity: Goal 1, Strategy 1

Strategy #1: Create a geographic information system (GIS) working group to coordinate trail-wide mapping efforts. Identify additional partners and develop internal partnership map.	Duration	Notes
Determine partners with GIS resources and identify existing data. Evaluate floodplain mapping and other data collection and analysis that contributes to sustainability of trail. Develop clear mapping with GIS layers to identify barriers such as streams, historic layers, and underserved communities.	Short term	Using college or university to leverage interns. National Endowment for the Humanities has grants to produce story maps and other resources. GIS support can be leveraged from planning district commissions, the Department of Transportation (USDOT), and federal highways. Does the National Park Service have indigenous landscapes data along waterways?
Prioritize data gaps and needs and develop a strategy for filling GIS gaps.	Medium term	
Begin filling GIS gaps (e.g., internships, cooperative agreements, volunteers) and leveraging national trail national mapping project (Department of the Interior digital trails mapping program).	Medium term	
Leverage work from other groups to identify routes and carry forward lessons learned for the trail, including big data sources to evaluate preferred routes from users.	Medium term	The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and US Department of Transportation would have this data. National Historic Trails would also have some data.

Table A-2. Connectivity: Goal 1, Strategy 2

Strategy #2: Identify appropriate mode of transit to close gaps (can gap be closed on land, water, bike, foot, horse). Identify stop points and transportation to the next portion of the route.	Duration	Notes
Identify key gaps and stop points to evaluate method(s) to close gaps.	Short term	
Begin planning for gap closure, identify transportation needs between existing trail sections, and apply for grants. Planning may also include a site inventory, feasibility study/corridor study, trail design and construction, and identifying the need for off-site parking and shuttles.	Medium term	
Close trail gaps and implement transportation solutions.	Long term	

Table A-3. Connectivity: Goal 1, Strategy 3

Strategy #3: Develop agreements with railroads, utilities, and other rights-of-way owners (e.g., highway and river crossings) and work to improve connectivity along the trail.	Duration	Notes
Inventory and prioritize needs related to railroad crossings and rights-of-way along the trail.	Short term	
Determine scenic, safe, and accessible trail routes and provide alternative routes where the trail does not currently exist.	Medium term	
Reach out to rights-of-way owners to identify opportunities and develop agreements. Develop agreements for highest priority needs.	Short and medium term	This strategy could be short, medium, and long term.

Table A-4. Connectivity: Goal 1, Strategy 4

Strategy #4: Ensure that all desired routes are in local master plans and local comprehensive plans so that the trail is evaluated for capital improvement projects.	Duration	Notes
Collaborate with the Connectivity team to ensure that any changes to new routes are included in master plans.	Short term	
Conduct a literature review of all local master plans and check for desired routes.	Medium term	

Goal 2: Create a Network to Close the Gaps—Build support among local officials, business leaders, transit providers, and educational institutions for trail connectivity. Develop a cohesive approach to identify gaps in connectivity.

Table A-5. Connectivity: Goal 2, Strategy 1

Strategy #1: Collaborate with government agencies (local, regional, state, and federal) and nonprofit organizations to renew and develop trail segment agreements along the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.	Duration	Notes
Identify the status of trail segment agreements and renew as appropriate. Renew and develop cooperative agreements and task agreements with lead segment partners.	Short and medium term	Renew as a short-term activity and new agreements as a medium activity.
Acquire or develop list of all current and potential partners for each trail segment and Identify what each partner can or may be able to contribute.	Short term	

Strategy #1: Collaborate with government agencies (local, regional, state, and federal) and nonprofit organizations to renew and develop trail segment agreements along the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.	Duration	Notes
Develop a charitable nonprofit organization for the trail.	Long term	During the workshop, partners expressed that there was a need for an entity that would support the entire trail.

Table A-6. Connectivity: Goal 2, Strategy 2

Strategy #2: Work with land conservancy and other national land trust/green space preservation organizations on land acquisition projects.	Duration	Notes
Identify and build relationships with land trust organizations	Short term	
Create a prioritized list of gaps in goal #1 to identify which gaps require land acquisition. Develop an acquisition plan to acquire property.	Medium term	Tackle the low-hanging fruit and implement acquisition plan long term
Focus on fundraising to support land acquisition.	Medium and long term	This strategy is ongoing until all gaps in the trail corridor are completed.

Branding, Marketing, Signs

Goal #1: Make a Plan—Develop a marketing plan inclusive of identity and communication needs for use with external and philanthropic audiences.

Table A-7. Branding, Marketing, Signs: Goal 1, Strategy 1

Strategy #1: Create a partner marketing and communication team (government and nonprofits) to oversee all branding and marketing efforts across the trail.	Duration	Notes
Identify existing and potential internal and external stakeholders to engage in a marketing plan. Incorporate connections with other trails and relevant publications.	Short term	
Evaluate effectiveness of messaging in cooperation with all partners and review and support all marketing firm resource needs.	Medium term	

Table A-8. Branding, Marketing, Signs: Goal 1, Strategy 2

Strategy #: 2: Develop a Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail communication and marketing plan.	Duration	Notes
Secure funding and create a scope of work for a marketing firm or CESU agreement.	Short term	Would states be willing to pull together teams to provide a communications and marketing plan? Funding could come through economic development, the US Economic Development Administration, and the US Department of Commerce.
Conduct audience analysis and literature review. Hold roundtable meetings with partners to understand needs and use what we learn to develop talking points around needs and opportunities.	Short term	
Conduct focus groups with community groups and tribes, particularly those with racial, socioeconomic, and geographic diversity.	Medium term	
Complete the final marketing plan.	Long term	

Goal #2: Break Down Barriers—Reduce barriers to information, awareness, and participation in trail-wide activities and experiences.

Table A-9. Branding, Marketing, Signs: Goal 2, Strategy 1

Strategy #1: Conduct targeted listening sessions, roundtables, and public meetings. Serve as a conduit and contact for the community to continue to engage with the trail on future projects and initiatives.	Duration	Notes
Identify potential community groups that may not be aware of the trail.	Short term	
Evaluate terms used for visitor activities along the trail (e.g., hiking may imply special clothing and equipment rather than walking). Evaluate these terms in the listening sessions. Incorporate data/research from outdoor industry groups or nonprofits that promote diversity in the outdoors.	Short term	
Provide training for staff related to cultural competency specific to relevant groups along the trail. Engage with tribal liaisons for the various trail segments. Coordinate with targeted people of color (e.g., indigenous groups and historical African American communities).	Medium term	
Work with local communities and agencies to create materials in multiple languages and platforms to provide information for international users.	Long term	

Table A-10. Branding, Marketing, Signs: Goal 2, Strategy 2

Strategy #2: Promote awareness of the trail and its designated trail segments by developing shared communication tools. Collect this information from listening sessions, roundtables, and public meetings.	Duration	Notes
Enter trail data into the NPS app for the trail and leverage existing apps (e.g., REI, All Trails, Strava) to share trail information with visitors.	Short term	
Coordinate with state offices of outdoor recreation and tourism, regional destination marketing organizations, and local businesses to promote awareness of the trail by using the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail logo while balancing individual segment identities.	Short term	Assets within states that they can promote. Include state departments of health.
Develop common/shared web and social media content for the trail.	Long term	The marketing plan can inform content.

Table A-11. Branding, Marketing, Signs: Goal 2, Strategy 3

Strategy #3: Provide resources for visitors such as maps, itineraries, and trip-planning information to accommodate specific needs/interests for diverse user groups.	Duration	Notes
Work with trail partners to add non-NPS sites to the NPS app.	Short term	
Connect with tourism bureaus and local chambers of commerce.	Medium term	
Build out tested itineraries on online platforms. Create opportunities for visitors to get stamps along the trail.	Long term	

Goal #3: Find Your Way—Develop a unified wayfinding plan.

Table A-12. Branding, Marketing, Signs: Goal 3, Strategy 1

Strategy #1: Form an interagency and partner planning group to collaborate and develop a sign and wayfinding plan.	Duration	Notes
Evaluate other platforms (e.g., All Trails, REI) and ensure that wayfinding information is consistent with the wayfinding plan.	Medium term	
Encourage managers to coordinate with local search and rescue and first responders to potentially include locator information as part of the wayfinding and sign plan.	Medium term	

Strategy #1: Form an interagency and partner planning group to collaborate and develop a sign and wayfinding plan.	Duration	Notes
Create a platform or centralized website for trail users to get information related to trails and wayfinding, story maps, and an interactive trail-wide map.	Long term	
Develop a sign and wayfinding plan and guidance.	Long term	

Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Impacts

Goal #1: Welcome All—Create a welcoming and inclusive trail experience for all visitors along the entire corridor.

Table A-13. Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Impacts: Goal 1, Strategy 1

Strategy #1: Host targeted listening sessions, roundtables, and public meetings. Serve as a conduit and contact for the community to continue to engage with the trail on future projects and initiatives.	Duration	Notes
Conduct listening sessions and develop ways to engage the public to better understand the audience. Analyze visitor use along Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail from trail counters in segments, visitor use survey information, and streetlight data. Build relationships with members of affinity groups that are already using the trail (e.g., Girl Trek, Outdoor Afro, Latino Outdoors, Corazon Latino, Outdoor Muslims, Green Muslim, Outdoor Asian, Pride Outside, LGBTQ Outdoors, interfaith groups).	Short term	Expand these actions to people who are not yet using the trail and nearby communities that may not have good access to trail (community overlays). Visitation decreased with COVID.
Identify and communicate untold stories.	Medium term	This action would need to inform interpretive signage and could occur in a listening session to hear from residents.
Leverage large nonprofit user groups that may help educate new users across the corridor. Use existing trail apps (e.g., All Trails) to promote the trail and provide accurate access information.	Long term	

Table A-14. Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Impacts: Goal 1, Strategy 2

Strategy #2: Improve the visitor experience by providing visitor services and improving trail conditions and related infrastructure to support visitor use throughout the trail.	Duration	Notes
Identify and prioritize critical locations and specific needs.	Short term	The trail will need to include a number of amenities for different ability levels.
Evaluate existing information and address dangerous road crossings for bicycles and pedestrians as well as on-road bike routes. Reduce barriers to trail travel.	Short term	
Leverage partners to help fund needs for improved infrastructure.	Medium term	
Consider updating or conducting trail-wide visitor use studies/plans.	Medium term	Make changes specifically at "in between" locations.

Goal #2: Make a Difference—Engage volunteers in stewardship activities to support the trail.

Table A-15. Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Impacts, Goal 2, Strategy 1

Strategy #1: Develop a unified, regional volunteer outreach strategy and tools to educate visitors and volunteers in stewardship activities.	Duration	Notes
Develop consistent national scenic trail volunteer guidance and protocols for partners to manage and support volunteers.	Short term	
Develop a list of trail-wide opportunities and associated handbooks, safety requirements, and other resources for volunteer managers.	Medium term	
Build out trail-wide volunteer section on website to provide centralized volunteer information.	Long term	

Table A-16. Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Impacts: Goal 2, Strategy 2

Strategy #2: Survey local groups for existing stewardship activities and opportunities to collaborate.	Duration	Notes
Identify new stewardship programs that could supplement existing activities.	Short term	
Implement stewardship programs and continue to support existing programs	Medium term	

Table A-17. Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Impacts: Goal 2, Strategy 3

Strategy #3: Establish programs for invasive plant management and plant revitalization using volunteers.	Duration	Notes
Inventory and prioritize sites for invasive plant removal.	Short term	
Develop a plan for an invasive plant management program, leveraging available resources.	Medium term	
Seek funding and resources, and implement coordinated programs.	Long term	

Table A-18. Visitor Use Management, Visitor Experience, and Impacts: Goal 2, Strategy 4

Strategy #4: Create opportunities for trainings to advance the sustainability of trail sections.	Duration	Notes
Seek opportunities to train staff regarding sustainability.	Short term	
Implement new techniques and share lessons learned with partners.	Medium term	
Engage staff and volunteers in basic sustainable trail monitoring.	Long term	

Partnership Structure

Goal #1: Leverage Partnerships—Leverage government agencies (local, regional, state, and federal), tribes; environmental, outdoor recreation, and community nonprofit organizations; and friends of groups in a unified partnership

Table A-19. Partnership Structure: Goal 1, Strategy 1

Strategy #1: Identify additional partners, develop a partnership map to show partners, and plan how to work together.	Duration	Notes
Acquire or develop a list of all current and potential partners for each trail segment and identify what each partner can or may be able to contribute.	Short term	
Work with trail partners to hire or leverage existing grant writers to find and acquire grant money for trail work, land acquisition, or outreach.	Short term	Identifying grant writers may be a pre-step or medium to long term. Partners would want to be aware of cycles for the Federal Lands Access Program and the Transportation Alternatives Program grants; stage it—work begins sooner than later. (Short term—who could be the fiscal agents to chase down grants?)
Prioritize trail, maintenance, and outreach gaps.	Medium term	

Table A-20. Partnership Structure: Goal 1, Strategy 2

Strategy #2: Create best a practice guidance document for partners to set a trail-wide standard for all projects and a trail-wide toolkit to prioritize trail-wide initiatives.	Duration	Notes
Evaluate existing information regarding the health and economic benefits of the trail to counties with trail gaps.	Short term	Include the Northern Virginia Regional Commission study, Headwaters Economics, and American Trails.
Identify existing programs to highlight trails and focus on how trails reduce the public cost (“Healthy Parks, Healthy People”).	Medium term	Apply data from regional recreation studies to promote and educate visitors on health benefits of the trail.
Build best practices for grants, and work together to achieve success. Provide support to other partners that need assistance with the skills and capacity to secure grants.	Long term	Consider grant programs holistically across the trail.

Table A-21. Partnership Structure: Goal 1, Strategy 3

Strategy #3: Establish a voice within counties where the team has identified gaps.	Duration	Notes
Identify a local non-government organization or interested group to be the voice in counties where there are gaps in the trail. Support counties to close trail gaps. Continue collaboration and open discussion with interested group through NPS points of contact/designees.	Short term	
Provide trail education and information to counties with trail gaps. Obtain Rivers, Trail, and Conservation Assistance Program assistance to provide organizational capacity support within the county/region for trails.	Short term	This strategy should occur immediately.
Create a map of proposed trail locations.	Medium term	

Table A-22. Partnership Structure: Goal 1, Strategy 4

Strategy #4: Develop partnerships with other trails that cross and align with trail. Create a cohesive experience for visitors, and improve public information about trail connectivity in the region.	Duration	Notes
Acquire or develop list of all current and potential partners for each trail segment and identify what each partner can or may be able to contribute. Improve partnerships with neighboring regional trails that intersect the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail by scheduling regular meetings.	Short term	

Strategy #4: Develop partnerships with other trails that cross and align with trail. Create a cohesive experience for visitors, and improve public information about trail connectivity in the region.	Duration	Notes
Prioritize trail needs by section (e.g., planning for and/or implementing trail gap closures, improving access to trail sections that loop to local trails, maintaining trails and amenities, promoting the trail).	Medium term	When the gaps are known, find property owners to see if a cohesive experience is possible.
Work with trail partners to incorporate Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail sections into local, regional, and state trail plans. Hire or leverage existing grant writers to find and acquire grants to fund corridor studies/feasibility studies, design and construction, land acquisition, trail maintenance, and outreach.	Long term	This action is particularly important for gap areas (gaps need to be known immediately).

Goal #2: Develop Strong Communication Tools—Create trail-wide initiatives for internal communication among partners, including developing a virtual toolkit and strong communication between partners.

Table A-23. Partnership Structure: Goal 2, Strategy 1

Strategy 1: Define partnership roles and responsibilities to develop legacy of knowledge in support of the trail.	Duration	Notes
Outline current roles and responsibilities and gather existing resources.	Short term	
Define roles and responsibilities for new partners.	Short term	
Support virtual toolkit efforts to store and maintain information to support partnerships.	Long term	

Table A-24. Partnership Structure: Goal 2, Strategy 2

Strategy 2: Conduct an annual roundtable meeting with the trail partners.	Duration	Notes
Schedule regular roundtable meetings and identify key topics, outcomes, and purposes.	Short term	
Allow for partner opportunities such as rotating exhibits, interpretive program review, and/or featured events.	Medium term	

Table A-25. Partnership Structure: Goal 2, Strategy 3

Strategy #3: Create a SharePoint site or online platform as a virtual toolkit for internal resources, collaboration, and communication.	Duration	Notes
Outline the file structure and develop a records management strategy.	Short term	
Build out the website and determine permissions and primary authors.	Short term	

Table A-26. Partnership Structure: Goal 2, Strategy 4

Strategy #4: Create technical support documents such as an infrastructure guideline and a continuous online map for trail section managers to use as a resource when developing projects.	Duration	Notes
Collaborate with the Safety and Infrastructure team and determine needs.	Short term	
Determine the mapping needs to support projects.	Medium term	
Continue to work on documents to build a resource library.	Long term	

Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities

Goal #1: Share Knowledge—Develop shared trail-wide standards for trail infrastructure, safety requirements, and sustainability.

Table A-27. Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities: Goal 1, Strategy 1

Strategy #1: Hold regular internal public safety roundtables and discussions on best practices.	Duration	Notes
Identify potential committee members and schedule visioning meeting for future roundtable meetings. Evaluate effectiveness of initial annual meeting and associated work products and schedule next meeting and potential routine calls with attendees.	Short term	
Schedule first safety roundtable - identify goals, objectives, and participants.	Medium term	
Continue with annual safety roundtable meetings. Bring in guest speakers, identify future and ongoing needs.	Long term	

Table A-28. Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities: Goal 1, Strategy 2

Strategy #2: Create shared standards and guidelines that allow partners to speak a common language around the trail, visitor use, and infrastructure. Consider the potential impact of trail use and new construction on existing historical resources and potential disturbance of archaeological resources.	Duration	Notes
Inventory areas for where to incorporate universal design principles or ADA/ABA standards that would be feasible.	Short term	How does each location meet the standard?
Apply for grant funding to improve universal design/ADA/ABA standards.	Medium term	Based on our analysis of universal design and need help to address short comings at specific sites.
Implement grants and other funding to redesign, rebuild, or otherwise bring segments of trail and associated facilities up to ADA/ABA standards or to incorporate universal design principles.	Long term	

Table A-29. Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities: Goal 1, Strategy 3

Strategy #3: Leverage existing programs for ongoing funding for safety and infrastructure.	Duration	Notes
Initiate routine communication between partners to discuss best practices around regular maintenance.	Short term	
Identify areas of potential shared resources to streamline existing efforts. Work with those partners to collaboratively apply for funding based on regional needs.	Medium term	
Target refurbish needs for 10–20 years, and work together to pursue funding opportunities.	Long term	
Obtain funding support to implement three construction and/or maintenance projects across the trail.	Long term	

Table A-30. Safety, Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities: Goal 1, Strategy 4

Strategy #4: Standardize sustainability and climate resiliency concepts and practices for all trail plans.	Duration	Notes
Include sustainability and climate resiliency concepts and practices in all plans created for the trail.	Short term	One of the key issues facing the trail in the south is coastal erosion with widening river.
Describe current climate change conditions along the trail and develop a shared interpretation and messaging related to climate impacts and response by developing talking points to communicate importance.	Medium term	Describe what the team is currently seeing along the trail.
Evaluate the effectiveness of materials and usage. Adjust as needed and continue implementation.	Long term	

	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES BY YEAR	37	29	21

This page intentionally blank.

APPENDIX B: WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

Name	Affiliation
Daniel Trott	Accokeek Foundation
Robert Upton	Arlington County, Virginia
Ryan Delaney	Arlington County, Virginia
Anthony Bates	Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, NPS
Ben Helwig	Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, NPS
Christiana Hanson	Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, NPS
Michael Leventhal	Conservancy of Broad Creek
David Brickley	Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail Association
Michael Alvino	District of Columbia, Department of Transportation
Nicole Wynands	Fairfax County Department of Transportation
Monica Mundrick	Fort Belvoir, US Department of Defense
Kirsten Talken-Spaulding	Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, NPS
Kari Barber	George Washington Regional Commission
Aaron La Rocca	George Washington Memorial Parkway, NPS
Aurelia Gracia	George Washington Memorial Parkway, NPS
Justin Monetti	George Washington Memorial Parkway, NPS
Maureen Joseph	George Washington Memorial Parkway, NPS
Mark Novak	Loudoun County, Virginia
Lisa Gutierrez	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Michael Jackson	Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Don Herring	Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Robert Patten	Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George’s County
Cynthia Labarge	National Capital Parks—East, NPS
Terry Osten	National Capital Parks—East, NPS
Michael Chambers	National Capital Parks—East, NPS
Michael Commisso	National Capital Parks—East, NPS
Lisa Hull	Northern Neck Planning District Commission

Name	Affiliation
Corey Miles	Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Debbie Spiliotopoulos	Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Walt Roscello	Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club
Amanda Daisey	Potomac River Complex, USFWS
Carina Velazquez	Potomac River Complex, USFWS
Naomi Fireman	Potomac River Complex, USFWS
Robert Boyd	Prince William County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism
Tanya Gosset	Prince William Forest Park, NPS
Gregg Kneipp	Prince William Forest Park, NPS
Lucille Walker	Southern Maryland Heritage Area
Sue Veith	St. Mary's County, Maryland
Chris Stevens	Stafford County, Virginia
Jennifer Wampler	Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Elizabeth Lipford	Virginia Department of Historic Resources
Marc Wagner	Virginia Department of Historic Resources
Heidi Mitter	Virginia Department of Transportation
Linda LaSut	Virginia Department of Transportation
Staci Martin	Virginia Tourism Corporation

APPENDIX C: LEADERSHIP TEAM AND IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Name	Affiliation
Daniel Trott	Accokeek Foundation
Ryan Delaney	Arlington Department of Parks and Recreation
Michael Leventhal	Conservancy of Broad Creek
Susan Berning	National Trust for Historic Preservation
Superintendent	Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail

The following partners were identified to champion each emphasis area and ensure that the strategies and actions listed in this plan move forward. Other trail stakeholders can identify which emphasis area(s) they would like to support.

CONNECTIVITY TEAM

Name	Affiliation
Daniel Trott	Accokeek Foundation
Anthony Bates	Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, NPS
Michael Leventhal	Conservancy of Broad Creek
David Brickley	Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail Association
Michael Alvino	District Department of Transportation, Washington, DC.
Don Herring	Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Johanna McCrehan	National Capital Planning Commission
Corey Miles and colleagues	Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Walt Roscello	Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club
Lucille Walker	Southern Maryland Heritage Area
Sue Veith	St. Mary's County, Maryland
Jennifer Wampler	Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

BRANDING, MARKETING, AND SIGNS TEAM

Name	Affiliation
Nicole Wynands	Fairfax County Department of Transportation
Bryan Perry	Great Allegheny Passage Conservancy
Michael Jackson	Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Lisa Hull	Northern Neck Planning District Commission
Walt Roscello	Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club
Carina Velazquez	Potomac River Complex, USFWS
Lucille Walker	Southern Maryland Heritage Area
Sue Veith	St. Mary's County, Maryland

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT AND EXPERIENCE TEAM

Name	Affiliation
Anthony Bates	Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, NPS
Christiana Hanson	Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, NPS
Kirsten Talken-Spaulding	Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, NPS
Aurelia Gracia	George Washington Memorial Parkway, NPS
Justin Monetti	George Washington Memorial Parkway, NPS
Carina Velazquez	Potomac River Complex, USFWS

PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE TEAM

Name	Affiliation
Ryan Delaney	Arlington Department of Parks and Recreation
Anthony Bates	Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, NPS
Aurelia Gracia	George Washington Memorial Parkway, NPS
Justin Monetti	George Washington Memorial Parkway, NPS
Bryan Perry	Great Allegheny Passage Conservancy
Meghan Dowker	National Capital Planning Commission
Corey Miles	Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Amanda Daisey	Potomac River Complex, USFWS

SAFETY, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES TEAM

Name	Affiliation
Daniel Trott	Accokeek Foundation
Maureen Joseph	George Washington Memorial Parkway, NPS
Michael Jackson	Maryland–National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Walt Roscello	Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club
Sue Veith	St. Mary's County, Maryland

This page intentionally blank.



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

POHE 866/178294

January 2022

