Discover the Potomac Gorge: A National Treasure

In the southwinds of Washington, D.C., the Potomac River passes through a landscape of rugged terrain and significant historical and cultural heritage. Over many millennia, an unusual combination of natural forces has produced a unique corridor known as the Potomac Gorge.

This 15-mile river stretch is one of the country’s most biodiverse areas, home to more than 1,400 plant species. Scientists have identified at least 30 distinct national vegetation communities, several of which are globally rare and imperiled. The Gorge also supports a wide variety of animal life, from rare insects to the bald eagle and fish like the American shad.

In total, the Potomac Gorge provides habitat to more than 200 rare plant species and natural communities, making it one of the most important natural areas in the eastern United States.

**SAFETY AND FOLLOW THE PARK RULES**

- It is unlawful to enter the Potomac River and C&O Canal from National Park Service lands for wading, wading, or bathing. This rule is enforced at the discretion of all law enforcement, near the national parks, rivers, and canals, and other law enforcement officers.
- Stay on marked trails. Bicycles and horses are allowed only on designated trails. Check with each park for specific rules before you visit.
- Pick up waste. Do not litter the parks.
- Potomac salmon and other wildlife live in the Potomac River. Please do not feed them.
- C&O Canal National Park is not responsible for any accidents or injuries incurred by wildlife.
- Camps are permitted only in designated areas.
- Alcoholic beverages, firearms, and metal detectors are prohibited in park areas.

**SELECTED ATTRACTIONS**

George Washington Merrillway
Great Falls Park (VA)
- Hiking, bicycling, rock climbing, fishing, and equestrian riding.
- 703-520-0877
- www.nps.gov/gwme
- Turkey Run Park (MD)
- Hiking, bicycling, spring wildflowers.
- 301-369-4582
- www.nps.gov/gwme
- Fort Marcy & Potomac Point
- Hunting, hiking, and historical interpretation.
- 301-546-4092
- www.nps.gov/gwme
- C&O Canal National Park
- Georgetown Visitor Center
- National Capital Parks-Ed.
- 202-357-1630
- www.nps.gov/gwme
- Goodfellow Tavern Visitor Center
- Georgetown, Washington, D.C.
- 202-338-7124
- www.nps.gov/gwme
- County and Regional Parks
- Rock Creek Park
- Visitor Center
- 202-547-0020
- www.nps.gov/rockcrk

Potomac Gorge Conservation Partners

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization dedicated to the protection of nature for people and wildlife across the globe. Through its work in the Potomac Gorge, the Conservancy is helping to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of this unique ecosystem.

For more than ten years, the Conservancy has been working to protect the Potomac Gorge, one of the most significant natural areas in the eastern United States. Through partnerships with local communities, government agencies, and other organizations, the Conservancy is working to preserve the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the Potomac Gorge for future generations.