



POTOMAC HERITAGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL PHASE I

The Potomac River corridor is one of the most historically significant and beautiful regions of the United States. To preserve the area and create educational and recreational opportunities, in 1983 Congress designated a corridor of land from Virginia to Pennsylvania the **Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trails** (PHNST).

In June 2008, the National Park Service designated an 8-mile stretch in Prince William County from Belmont Bay to Leesylvania Park, "Phase I of Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail". This area became one of only 24 national historic and scenic trails in the country. Beginning in Belmont Bay, the route winds through the Occoquan Bay and Featherstone National Wildlife Refuges, Veterans Park, Rippon Landing Community Park and the Julie Metz Wetlands Bank to meet an existing trail portion of the trail located in Leesylvania Park.

Currently there are five segments of the trail that must be completed to connect the 8-mile expanse. Proffers from developers will provide funding or land for portions the Belmont Bay, Rippon Center and Rippon Boulevard sections of the trail. Some funding is designated for other portions of the trail, but additional resources are needed to complete the project.

The PHNST is an exciting economic opportunity for Prince William County. Through the enhancement of existing recreational amenities it will attract both historical and sports enthusiast to the area. The PHNST can be marketed in national publications and websites as a historic destination where families can enjoy nature during the day and quality restaurants, lodging and shopping in the evening.

Next door to the future George Mason Science and Environmental Studies Center, the trail will provide educational and interpretive experiences for children of all ages. Over 220 species of birds, 600 species of plants, and 65 species of butterflies can be found in the Occoquan Bay Refuge alone. The trail will ensure existing natural resources are preserved for future generation.