PLANE AHEAD, KNOW BEFORE YOU GO
SHARE OUR TRAILS

STICK TO TRAILS
MANAGE YOUR DOG AND DOG WASTE

PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT
LEAVE IT AS YOU FIND IT

No matter what your passion — hiking, biking, climbing, paddling, or fishing — practice it safely and courteously to others. Where bicyclists are allowed, control your speed, pass with care, yield to slower-moving visitors, and sound a warning when approaching others. When stopping or resting, move to the right.

Staying on marked trails is a simple way to protect the Gorge's sensitive resources. Knowing the parks' site-specific regulations will help protect the places you visit. Climbing on historic structures, picking flowers, or leaving trash or dog waste spoils everyone's experience.

The Potomac Gorge is home to precious and irreplaceable natural and cultural resources, and we all have a responsibility to help preserve the area's integrity. Climbing on historic structures, picking flowers, or leaving trash or dog waste spoiled experiences.

LEAVE NO TRACE

More than two million people visit the Potomac Gorge parklands each year, raising the risk of our "loving the parks to death." How can you help protect wildlife and natural areas when you visit?

For more information on Leave No Trace, call 800-332-4100 or visit the website: www.LNT.org.
Discover the Potomac Gorge: A National Treasure

On the outskirts of Washington, D.C., the Potomac River passes through a landscape of surprising beauty and ecological significance. Here, 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 biologically diverse areas, home to more than 1,400 plant species. Scientists have identified at least 30 distinct native vegetation communities, each of which is globally rare and imperiled. The Gorge also supports a rich array of animal life, from rare vertebrates to the wild and wonderful world of freshwater fish.

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

The Potomac Gorge is critical to the continued existence of mountain lions, which are on the brink of extinction.

This dramatic feature of the Great Falls, Virginia, results from periodic river flooding and natural landslides and provides a natural area that attracts and supports wildlife.

Owning this area is vital to the existence of the Potomac Gorge.

As the Potomac Gorge is the major drain for the Potomac River basin, it provides a unique corridor for the conservation of biodiversity.

The Potomac Gorge is an important area for the conservation of biodiversity.

THE POTOMAC GORGE IS

WHAT IS THE POTOMAC GORGE?

Over thousands of years, natural forces have created a beautiful and diverse landscape. The Potomac Gorge is a deep, narrow valley, once a series of four major rivers, and now a single river. This valley was shaped by the river's meandering and the forces of erosion. Over time, this process has created a unique and diverse ecosystem.

The Potomac Gorge is a major drainage area for the Potomac River basin. It provides a crucial corridor for the conservation of biodiversity.

WHAT ARE THE THREATS TO THE POTOMAC GORGE?

Many factors threaten the natural resources of the Potomac Gorge. This oasis in the middle of an urban environment is home to many rare and endangered species. Over the years, the Gorge has been subject to various threats, including habitat destruction, invasive species, pollution, and development.

Invasive species such as the Japanese honeysuckle and kudzu have crowded residential and commercial development, further threatening the natural communities of the Gorge.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PROTECT THE POTOMAC GORGE?

There are several ways you can help protect the Potomac Gorge. First, you can support the National Park Service by purchasing a Park Pass or donating to their conservation efforts. Second, you can participate in local volunteer programs or organize your own. Finally, you can support organizations such as the Nature Conservancy or the Potomac Conservancy, which work to protect and preserve this unique area.

HOW CAN WE PROTECT THE POTOMAC GORGE?

As one of the more than two million people who visit the Potomac Gorge each year, your actions can help protect this special natural and historical resource. Here are some ways you can help conserve and restore the Potomac Gorge:

1. Support the Potomac Gorge: Support the Potomac Gorge through your tax-deductible gifts to the National Park Service, the Nature Conservancy, or the Potomac Conservancy.

2. Volunteer: Volunteer with the National Park Service, the Nature Conservancy, or the Potomac Conservancy to help conserve and restore the Potomac Gorge.

3. Be Safe and Follow the Park’s Rules: Be safe and follow the park’s rules. Always visit the park in a group, and avoid exploring unfamiliar areas.

4. Support Local Wildlife: Support local wildlife by avoiding the use of chemicals that can harm them. Instead, use organic pesticides and fertilizers.

5. Keep the Park Clean: Keep the park clean by picking up any trash you find on your visit. This helps protect the natural beauty of the Potomac Gorge.

EXPLORE HISTORIC SITES IN THE POTOMAC GORGE

The Potomac Gorge is home to several historic sites that reflect the area’s rich history and cultural significance. These sites are managed by the National Park Service, the Potomac Conservancy, and other local organizations.

1. Great Falls National Park: This park features the Potomac River’s most dramatic feature, the Great Falls. Here, the river drops 60 feet in a half-mile stretch, creating a stunning waterfall.

2. The Potomac Overlook Regional Park: This park offers breathtaking views of the Potomac River and the Great Falls. It is a popular spot for picnicking, hiking, and birdwatching.

3. Cabin John Stream Valley Park: This park is a rare example of an undisturbed, natural stream valley. It is home to a rich array of plant and animal life.

4. The Great Falls Tavern: This historic site was the site of a popular amusement park until it was destroyed by a fire in 1956.

5. The Potomac River: The Potomac River runs through the Potomac Gorge and offers opportunities for fishing, kayaking, and canoeing.

BE SAFE AND FOLLOW THE PARK’S RULES

1. Be safe and follow the park’s rules. Always visit the park in a group, and avoid exploring unfamiliar areas.

2. Keep the park clean by picking up any trash you find on your visit. This helps protect the natural beauty of the Potomac Gorge.

3. Keep the river clean by avoiding the use of chemicals that can harm aquatic life. Instead, use organic pesticides and fertilizers.

4. Be aware of the Potomac River’s high water currents, especially near dams, falls, and rapids. River currents are strong and unpredictable.

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SELECTED ATTRACTIONS

George Washington Memorial Parkway

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The Potomac Gorge is a unique and diverse area that offers a glimpse into the history and culture of the eastern United States.