



Foundation Document Overview

Piscataway Park

Maryland



Contact Information

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Purpose



The purpose of PISCATAWAY PARK is to preserve historic vistas from Mount Vernon estate and Fort Washington while protecting the natural, cultural, ethnographic, scientific, educational, and recreational values of the park.



Significance

Significance statements express why Piscataway Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- The protection of Piscataway Park is achieved in part through scenic easements and collaborative partnerships, one of the first of such management models in the national park system and a pioneering strategy for land conservation in the United States.
- The archeological record at Piscataway Park encompasses more than 11,500 years of human history and prehistory, reflecting a diversity of cultures that have occupied this prominent site on the banks of the Potomac River.
- Reflecting Piscataway Park's rich history and use, many American Indians and other groups maintain a deep connection with the park's spiritual landscape through the continuation of traditional cultural practices.
- The Moyaone Reserve at Piscataway Park is rooted in the mid-20th-century American environmental movement and demonstrates a unique approach to conservation in neighborhood planning and nature-oriented architectural design that integrates with the area's natural wooded character.
- Piscataway Park protects native habitats such as inland forests and Potomac tidal marshlands, which support a diversity of natural resources and recreational opportunities in close proximity to metropolitan Washington, DC.



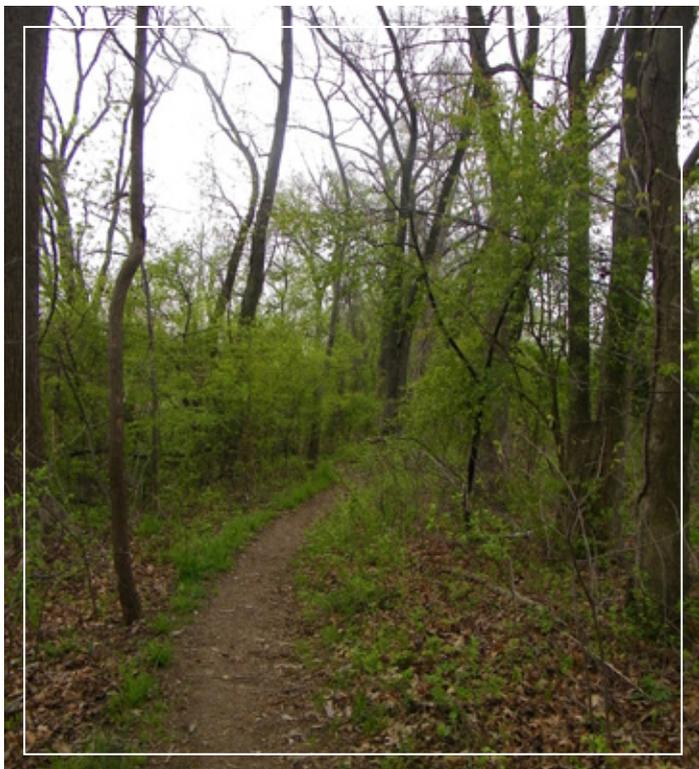
Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Views and Vistas**
- **Archeological Resources**
- **Ethnographic Resources**
- **Historic District**
- **Natural Communities**
- **Recreational Opportunities**
- **Conservation Easements**

Piscataway Park contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Partnerships and Opportunities for Education**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- A place where the land shaped the people and the people shaped the land, the area now known as Piscataway Park has witnessed a confluence of cultures that continues to mold the park.
- As evidenced by its archeological record, the site of Piscataway Park has been culturally significant to various groups of the Potomac region for thousands of years and continues to provide a spiritual focal point and connection for many communities today.
- Through the protection and stewardship of diverse ecology, Piscataway Park provides a sanctuary for both visitors and wildlife along the shoreline of the Potomac River.
- Due to its unique land management partnerships and opportunities to learn sustainable techniques and land stewardship, Piscataway Park serves as an educational landscape where the ideals of preservation, stewardship, agriculture, and sustainability are shared and experienced at the park.



Description

Piscataway Park was created as a unit of the National Park Service on October 4, 1961, through Public Law 87-362. The park is located along the Maryland shore of the Potomac River approximately 10 miles south of Washington, DC, and contains more than 4,500 acres of parkland. Approximately one-third of the land that comprises Piscataway Park is owned by the National Park Service, and nearly two-thirds of the park is privately owned. The National Park Service holds scenic easements over the privately owned land. The park also includes the 8.3-acre Fort Washington marina. The protection of the landscape serves to preserve the views from historic Mt. Vernon and Fort Washington.

The landscape throughout the park is generally managed as natural area characterized by heavily wooded rolling hills with fields and meadows, streams, and wetlands along the riverfront. The park provides extensive open space and access to the Potomac River near metropolitan Washington, DC, with opportunities for fishing, canoeing, kayaking, picnicking, and hiking. The diverse habitats and outdoor experiences in the NPS-owned portions of Piscataway Park offer outstanding opportunities for natural exploration and education in an expanding metropolitan area. Piscataway Park contains a rich prehistoric and historic American Indian archeological record, with sites that are scientifically and historically significant at the local, state, and national levels. Recorded archeological sites exhibit evidence of human occupation that spans more than 11,500 years. The park also protects remnants of the Marshall Hall mansion and its family cemetery, which represent colonial life along the Potomac River.

The park also contains rich natural resources, including forests and wetland ecosystems, that provide a wide range of recreational and educational opportunities for visitors. There are trails and boardwalks throughout the site, which provide visitors the chance to observe migrating songbirds ...and other wildlife.

Also within the NPS-owned portion of the park is the National Colonial Farm, operated under cooperative agreement by the Accokeek Foundation, a private nonprofit organization. The Accokeek Foundation also runs the Ecosystem Farm at Piscataway Park, an eight-acre organic vegetable farm.

Within the legislative boundaries of the park are two major private holdings. The historic Hard Bargain Farm complex, owned and operated by the Alice Ferguson Foundation, a private foundation, provides access to agricultural resources and an environmental center. The Moyaone Reserve, a residential community, was developed as a unique approach to conservation-based community planning and architecture.

