

The Island

After Roosevelt's death on January 6, 1919, citizens wanted to establish a memorial in his honor. The 91 acre wooded island in the Potomac seemed the perfect place. The Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association purchased the island in 1932. Congress approved funds in 1960 and the memorial was dedicated on October 27, 1967. Eric Gugler designed the memorial. Paul Manship designed the statue.

Theodore Roosevelt Island has a diverse history. Native Americans called the island "Analostan" and used it for fishing. It was later named "My Lord's Island," when King Charles I granted the island to Lord Baltimore. The next owner, a sea captain, called it "Barbadoes," after his childhood home. For years it was a summer resort for other wealthy Virginians. The Mason family owned it for 125 years. In the early 1800's, John Mason built a brick mansion and cultivated extensive gardens. The Masons also operated a ferry from the island to Georgetown.

The Masons left "Mason's Island" by 1832, after a causeway built to the Virginia shore stagnated their water. For years after that the island was a picnic resort, except during the Civil War when black and white Union Army troops were stationed here.

Today, trails lead through the marsh, swamp and forest. Visitors often see birds or small mammals. The outdoor memorial, with Roosevelt's thought-provoking quotes and statue, captures the spirit of this energetic President who was ahead of his time.



National Park Service
George Washington Memorial Parkway



THEODORE ROOSEVELT: NATURALIST...VISIONARY... PRESIDENT

**"THE NATION BEHAVES WELL IF IT TREATS THE
NATURAL RESOURCES AS ASSETS WHICH IT MUST
TURN OVER TO THE NEXT GENERATION INCREASED
AND NOT IMPAIRED IN VALUE."**

Theodore Roosevelt was a man with vision. He considered the future before making decisions and his legacies still influence us. Perhaps his greatest legacy was in conservation. This wooded island is a fitting memorial to the outdoorsman, naturalist, and visionary who was our 26th President.

The Roosevelt Museum of Natural History

Roosevelt was born on October 27, 1858, in New York City. As a boy, he enjoyed collecting live animals, as well as hunting "specimens" to study. At age eight, he established his very own natural history museum, with items gathered from neighborhood and family travels. The personal challenges of asthma and poor eyesight drove Roosevelt to make the most of his strengths. By the time of his presidency, he was well known as an outstanding naturalist and outdoorsman. This background would prepare him for the challenges of his administration.

"I hate a man who would skin the land!"

After William McKinley was assassinated in 1901, Roosevelt became our 26th President. America's natural resources were threatened. Species like the bison and beaver were disappearing; others were extinct. Soil fertility was low and about four-fifths of prime forests had been cut. Roosevelt expressed concern: *"...the time has come to inquire seriously what will happen when our forests are gone, when the coal, the iron, the oil and the gas are exhausted, when the soils have been...washed into the streams, polluting our rivers"*

To emphasize his views, this fiery speaker once threw away a prepared speech and roared, *"I hate a man who would skin the land!"* His leadership changed public perception that America's natural resources were inexhaustible.

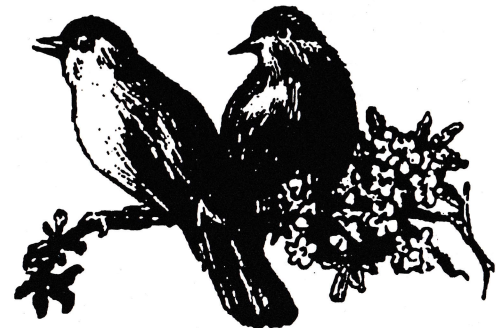
Under Roosevelt's leadership, the Federal Government greatly expanded its role in preserving our nation's resources. In 1906, Roosevelt signed into law the Antiquities Act. The act had evolved out of an effort to preserve the magnificent cliff dwellings, pueblo ruins and early missions discovered on public lands in the southwestern United States. It allowed, through presidential proclamation, the establishment of National Monuments. Roosevelt used this authority to protect 18 unique areas including Devils Tower,

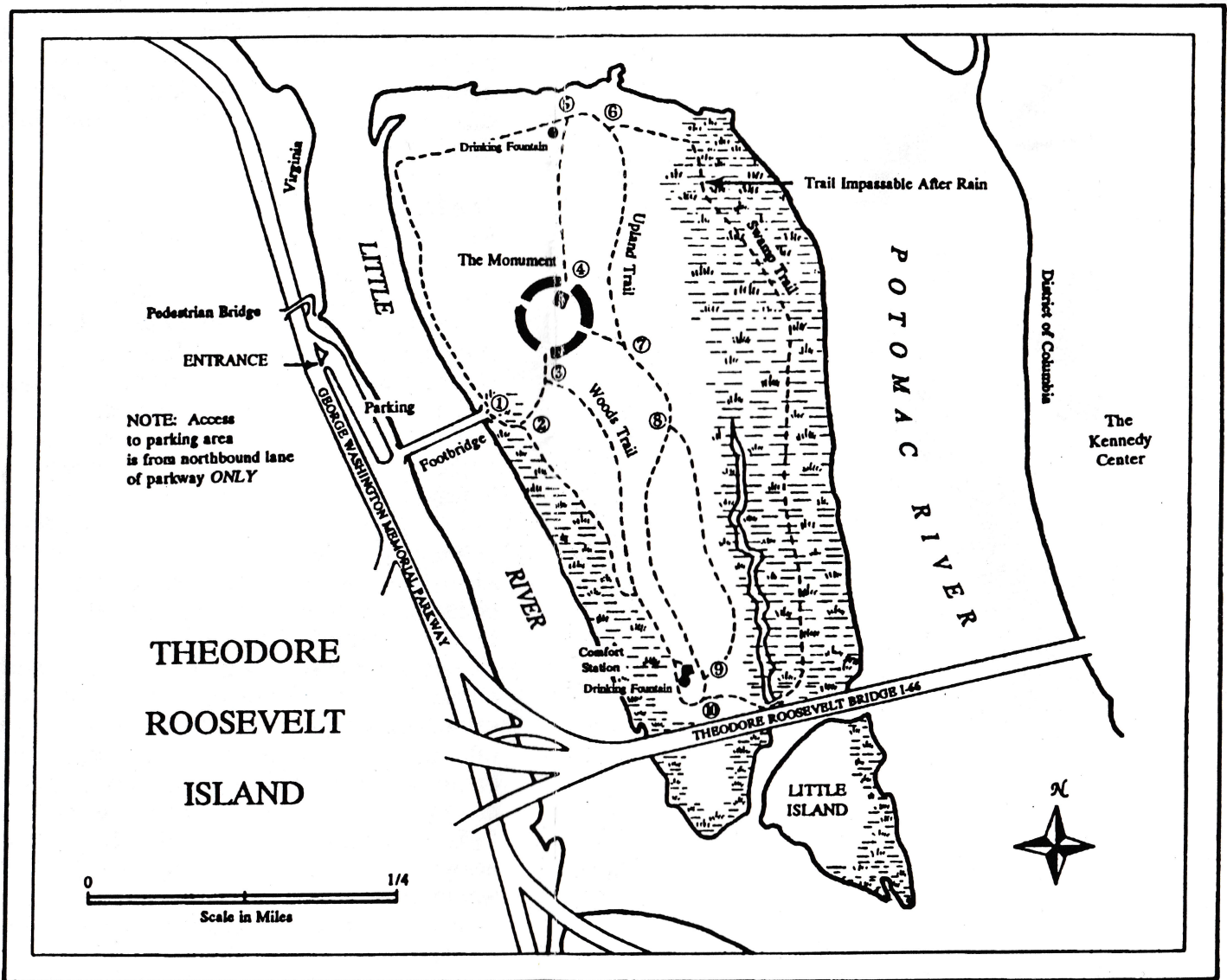
Lassen Peak, Muir Woods, the Grand Canyon and Mount Olympus. Many of these National Monuments were later redesignated as National Parks. Roosevelt also established the U.S. Forest Service. In all, he set aside over 234 million acres of public lands as national parks, forests, monuments, and wildlife refuges.

He was honored for his conservation ethics: *Cervus Roosevelti*, a subspecies of elk discovered in Olympic National Park, was named for him. After his presidency, he explored the River of Doubt in Brazil, contributing to the knowledge of its wetlands and rainforests. The river was renamed Rio Roosevelt. These tributes seem fitting for a President who was once late for a Cabinet meeting because he was bird watching.

Perhaps his most famous namesake is a children's toy. Once, while on a hunting trip, his aides tied up an old bear for him to kill. His unwillingness to shoot the defenseless animal prompted a newspaper artist to draw a cartoon. The cartoon was published nationwide and inspired a toy maker to create the Teddy Bear.

Roosevelt left other legacies. He was a strong supporter of women's and civil rights, supported the Pure Food Bill (a forerunner of the Food and Drug Administration), and was the driving force behind construction of the Panama Canal. In 1905 he negotiated an end to the Russo-Japanese war, becoming the first American to win the Nobel Peace Prize. He was also the first President to use the phrase "White House" as an official title instead of nickname. His legacies touch us daily.





**CIRCLED NUMBERS CORRESPOND WITH TRAIL POSTS.
DURING YOUR VISIT, PLEASE...**

Stay on marked trails. Keep pets leashed.
Respect the wildlife--do not harass any animals.

Let others enjoy the wildflowers--do not pick plants.
Dispose of litter in trash cans. No bicycle riding.