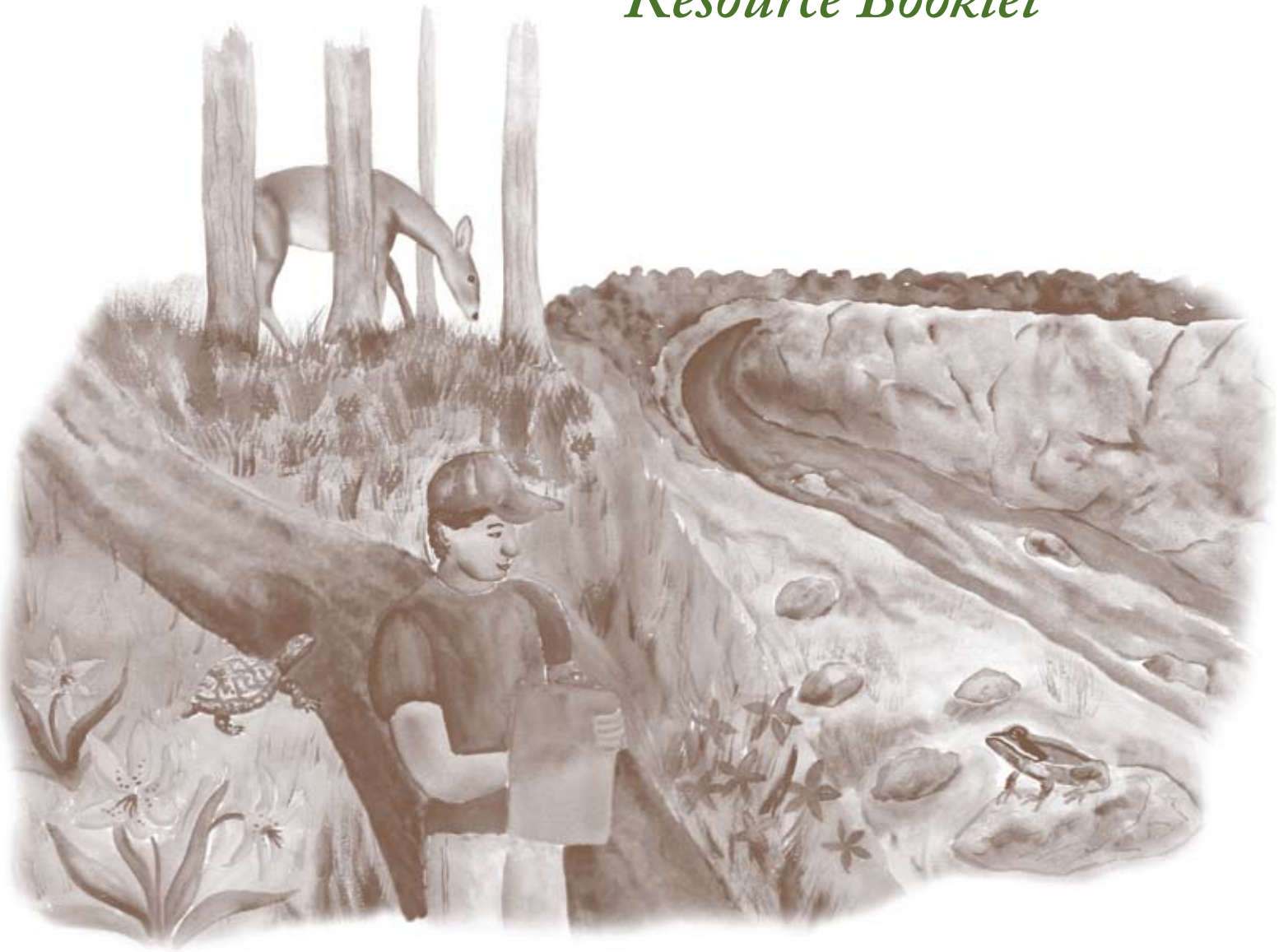


# Potomac Gorge

## Potomac Gorge

A Natural Monument  
in the Shadow of National Monuments

### *Resource Booklet*



#### *Bridging the Watershed*

An outreach program of the Alice Ferguson Foundation in partnership with the National Park Service and area schools



## Table of Contents

Potomac Gorge Glossary of Terms .....	1
Leave No Trace Frontcountry Ethics .....	3

# Potomac Gorge

## Glossary of Terms

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**Biodiversity:** The term biodiversity refers to the variety of life on Earth at all its levels, from genes to ecosystems, and the ecological processes that sustain it. Biodiversity includes not only species we consider rare, threatened, or endangered, but every living thing — even organisms we still know little about, such as microbes, fungi and invertebrates. Biodiversity is important everywhere; species and habitats in your area, as well as those in distant lands, all play a role in maintaining healthy ecosystems.<sup>1</sup>

**Ecosystem:** An ecosystem is a natural unit consisting of all plants, animals and micro-organisms in an area functioning together with all of the non-living physical factors of the environment. A coral reef is one example of an ecosystem.

**Habitat:** A habitat is a place where an organism or a biological population normally lives or occurs.<sup>2</sup>

**Hydrogeology:** The area of geology that studies the ways that groundwater (hydro) moves through the soil and rock of the earth.<sup>3</sup>

**Nutrient Cycle:** Organic material is always being used and reused, over and over again. Taken from the soil by plants, called producers, it is then passed on to herbivore consumers (plant eaters), which in turn are eaten by carnivore secondary consumers. The organic materials from each, upon dying, are made available for the plants to use again by the decomposers.<sup>4</sup>

**Macroinvertebrate:** A macroinvertebrates is an animal lacking a backbone. Benthic macroinvertebrates are macroinvertebrates that live, at least for part of their lives, in the bottom of streams and rivers.

**Physiographic province:** A physiographic province is a landform region, an area delineated according to

similar terrain that has been shaped by a common geologic history.<sup>5</sup> Maryland has six. Going from west (the mountains) to east, they are: the Appalachian Plateaus, Ridge and Valley, Blue Ridge, Piedmont Plateau, the Coastal Plain, and the Atlantic Continental Shelf. Virginia has five physiographic provinces. They are: Appalachian Plateau, Blue Ridge, Valley and Ridge, Piedmont, and Coastal Plain.

Species status classification:

**Rare species:** an organism which is very uncommon or scarce. A species can get this classification if there are less than 10,000 of them, if it exists in a narrow habitat range, or if its habitat is fragmented.

**State rare:** Species that are rare in a particular state.

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<sup>1</sup> “What is Biodiversity?” *Center for Biodiversity and Conservation*. 14 Dec. 2007. American Museum of Natural History. Accessed 5 Jan. 2009. <http://cbc.amnh.org/center/what.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Biology Online Dictionary.” *Biology Online*. 22 July 2008. Biology Online.org. Accessed 3 Dec. 2008. <http://www.biology-online.org/dictionary/habitat>.

<sup>3</sup> Morgan, Carrie. “What’s a Hydrogeologist.” *Environmental Education for Kids*. Dec. 2008. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 4 Dec. 2008. <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/job/hydrogeologist.htm>

<sup>4</sup> “Decomposition: Shredders and Decomposers.” *Riverbend Nature Center online*. 25 Oct. 2007. Riverbend Nature Center. Accessed 4 Dec. 2008. <http://www.rbnc.org/schoolunits/soildecomp.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Woodward, Susan L. “Physiographic Provinces of Virginia.” *Geology 202*. Jan. 2005. Radford University. Accessed 4 Dec. 2008. <http://www.runet.edu/~swoodwar/classes/geog202/physprov/physprov.html>.

**Globally rare:** Species not found anywhere else in the world.

**Threatened species:** Species likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.<sup>6</sup>

**Endangered species:** An “endangered” species is one that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.<sup>7</sup>

**Terrace:** A level or near-level area of land, generally above a river or ocean and separated from it by a steeper slope. A river terrace is made when, at some time in the past, the river flowed at a higher level. A terrace may be made of river deposits such as gravel or sand, or it could be cut by the river on bedrock.<sup>8</sup>

**Tributary streams** are small streams that enter into the main stream.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> “Endangered Species Program.” 18 Nov. 2008. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Accessed 8 Dec. 2008. <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/wildlife.html>.

<sup>7</sup> “USFWS: Endangered Species Glossary.” U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Home. Web. Accessed 1 September 2009. <http://fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/glossary/index.html>.

<sup>8</sup> “Geological Glossary.” *Geologicalglossary.com*. 9 Dec. 2008. <http://www.geologicalglossary.com/>.

<sup>9</sup> Ritter, Michael E. “The Physical Environment: An Introduction to Physical Geography.” 21 June 2007. University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point. Accessed 5 Dec. 2008. [http://www.uwsp.edu/geo/faculty/ritter/geog101/textbook/title\\_page.html](http://www.uwsp.edu/geo/faculty/ritter/geog101/textbook/title_page.html).

# Outdoor Ethics for the Frontcountry

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## Know Before You Go

- Be prepared! Remember food and water, and clothes to protect you from cold, heat and rain.
- Use maps to plan where you're going. Check them along the way so you'll stay on course and won't get lost.
- Remember to bring a leash for your pet and plastic bags to pick up your pet's waste.
- Learn about the areas you plan to visit. Read books, check online and talk to people before you go. The more you know, the more fun you'll have.

## Stick To Trails and Camp Overnight Right

- Walk and ride on designated trails to protect trailside plants.
- Do not step on flowers or small trees. Once damaged, they may not grow back.
- Respect private property by staying on designated trails.
- Camp only on existing or designated campsites to avoid damaging vegetation.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Don't dig trenches or build structures in your campsite.

## Trash Your Trash and Pick Up Poop

- Pack it in, Pack it out. Put litter — even crumbs, peels and cores—in garbage bags and carry it home.
- Use bathrooms or outhouses when available. If not available, bury human waste in a small hole 6–8 inches deep and 200 feet or 70 big steps from water.

- Use a plastic bag to pack out your pet's poop to a garbage can.
- Keep water clean. Do not put soap, food, or human or pet waste in lakes or streams.

## Leave It As You Find It

- Leave plants, rocks and historical items as you find them so others can enjoy them.
- Treat living plants with respect. Carving, hacking or peeling plants may kill them.

## Be Careful With Fire

- Use a camp stove for cooking. Stoves are easier to cook on and create less impact than a fire.
- If you want to have a campfire, be sure it's permitted and safe to build a fire in the area you're visiting. Use only existing fire rings to protect the ground from heat. Keep your fire small.
- Remember, a campfire isn't a garbage can. Pack out all trash and food.
- Before gathering any firewood, check local regulations.
- Burn all wood to ash and be sure the fire is completely out and cold before you leave.

## Keep Wildfire Wild

- Observe wildlife from a distance and never approach, feed or follow them.
- Human food is unhealthy for all wildlife and feeding them starts bad habits.
- Protect wildlife and your food by securely storing your meals and trash.

## Share Our Trails and Manage Your Pet

- Be considerate when passing others on the trail.
- Keep your pet under control to protect it, other visitors and wildlife.
- Listen to nature. Avoid making loud noises or yelling. You will see more wildlife if you are quiet.
- Be sure the fun you have outdoors does not bother anyone else. Remember, other visitors are there to enjoy the outdoors too.



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