



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

National Capital Region  
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Memorial Parkway  
McLean, Virginia

Department of the Interior  
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## **George Washington Memorial Parkway News Release**

Release Date: June 20, 2006

For Immediate Release

Contact: David Vela, 703 289-2500

### **The National Park Service will sponsor scientific research at Great Falls Park, Virginia and at Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, located in Maryland**

The National Park Service is sponsoring scientific research at Great Falls Park, Virginia (a unit of the George Washington Memorial Parkway) and Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, Maryland (C&O Canal NHP) to document plant communities and soils living on and near cliff surfaces in the Potomac River Gorge. Additionally, the study will assess any impacts of recreation use and park visitation on these important cliff habitats. The first phases of the study are scheduled to begin during the summer of 2006 with a tentative completion date of 2009.

This ongoing study will identify and help preserve fragile vegetation and soils in the biologically rich area of the Potomac River Gorge and provide invaluable information for current and future management planning efforts at Great Falls Park and C&O Canal NHP.

An open house to learn more about the upcoming study and meet some of the researchers will be held at the Great Falls Park Auditorium at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. Great Falls Park is located at: 9200 Old Dominion Drive, McLean, Virginia. The entrance is at the intersection of Georgetown Pike (193) and Old Dominion Drive. From the Beltway (495) take exit 44 to Georgetown Pike, towards Great Falls, then turn right on to Old Dominion Drive.


The principal research investigator will be Dr. Jeffrey L. Marion, Research Biologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Virginia Tech Field Station, and co-investigators Mr. Charlie Davis, Ecologist/Botanist, located in Lutherville, MD; Dr. Steve Lawson, Assistant Professor, Virginia Tech Department of Forestry; and Dr. Lynn Resler, Assistant Professor, Virginia Tech Department of Geography. Research results will be announced periodically through press releases and website postings on [www.nps.gov/gwmp](http://www.nps.gov/gwmp) and [www.nps.gov/choh](http://www.nps.gov/choh).

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



The Potomac River Gorge in Virginia and Maryland is a highly accessible protected natural area bordered by the Washington DC metropolitan area. It extends 15 miles from Great Falls to Roosevelt Island. The Gorge is one of the most biologically abundant and diverse areas in the National Park System with more than 400 occurrences of over 200 rare species and natural communities. The Potomac River Gorge receives exceptionally high visitation with nearly two million visitors annually.

For further information, please contact the George Washington Memorial Parkway Superintendent at (703) 289-2500 or via email at [gwmp\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:gwmp_superintendent@nps.gov).

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