

Remarks at B & A Trail  
October 5, 1998  
Annapolis, Maryland

PHOTOCOPY  
PRESERVATION

**First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton**  
**Remarks at the Baltimore-Annapolis Trail**  
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Thank you. Thank you very much. I am so delighted to be here today and I am especially pleased to see all of you, in particular, to see all the children. I loved my drive here where I can see all the houses that are already decorated for Halloween and it just reminded me of how much I love Halloween. We don't open the White House for trick-or-treating and it made me feel a little sad. I am going to think that through and see if there is something we can do about that.

Mostly I wanted to come to thank all of you who have done so much to make the B & A trail a model for our nation. And I also want to congratulate and thank the Back Porch Pickers who did such a good job before I was here. How about another round of applause for them.

I would like to thank my long time friend Secretary Slater and the entire Department of Transportation for the leadership and the resources they have committed to the Millennium Trails Program. And I also want to thank Governor Glendening and Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and County Executive John Gary who are all helping to make Maryland a leader in the East Coast Greenway and the entire trail movement.

I was also pleased to be with Senator Sarbanes, Senator Mikulski and Congressman Cardin and I believe that Annapolis Mayor Dean Johnson is with us. As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the National Trails System Act, I want to thank Bob Stanton and the entire Park Service for helping us safeguard 250,000 miles of scenic, recreational and historic trails. And thanks also to David Burwell and all the volunteers who in two weeks will celebrate 10,000 miles of real trails.

Many of you have learned to love this trail and have been on it so many times. I have only been on it once, just a few minutes ago, but I already have a sense of what it must mean to all of you. Now like all success stories, it is the product of many hands. We have already heard from Elizabeth Wybel. And I appreciate her so much not only telling us what she has done and what it has meant to her, but mentioning so many of you who have worked together on this trail.

David Dionne, who many people say is the heart and soul of this project. Stan Weber and the friends of the B & A Trail. And the young people like the Scouts who walked down with me and the other Scouts who are here today. All of you are the volunteers who have helped transform this old trolley line into a community lifeline and carry on our traditions.

You know when we take a stroll on the B & A Trail or the C & O Canal, we are walking in the footsteps of people who understood clearly how important it was for all of us who live in an urban environment, like we can here, to get out and be able to enjoy nature and do it in a way that is accessible to every person.

And now we have an opportunity to do make our footprints ones that others will follow. I love it when I hear David Dionne's words that we put the community into the trail. And I know what

that means because just in the little bit that I saw, I can see that the community is part of the trail. You can see the flower beds that volunteers and families have tended. You can hear the stories of the trailblazers and the Rangers and the Scouts -- the Eagle Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Boy Scouts, the Cub Scouts, the Cadets -- everyone who has done something to make this trail so important and beautiful not only to this community which shares this trail, but to the more than one and a half million people that use it every day.

It has also been a way to unite and bring together the community and for that I am also very impressed and very grateful. For all these reasons, we have celebrated and this is why all of you have come out this afternoon. We know we have to replicate this across our nation. Our commitment thirty years ago helped build the Appalachian Trail and in the next two years it will literally connect the entire length. And most of you who have walked on any part of the Appalachian Trail, I imagine that will make even more of us think we will walk it. Well, we probably won't fulfill that but at least we can now know that it goes all the length of our east coast.

We need to build a trail system for the next century, just as the visionaries began the trail system 75 years ago and in 1968 with national legislation. And that is what the Millennium Trails Program will help us do. We will identify 2,000 millennium trails by the year 2000. They may be greenways or byways which carve a path through urban and rural areas, scenic trails which carry us along our landscape, trails that allow us to bike or hike, trace human history or even planetary history as I just heard. And they will be divided in this way.

There will be twelve national millennium trails which will be large visionary projects of national significance. There will be 52 Millennium Legacy Trails, all of which will be named by nominations of governors and will include the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. There will be 2,000 community trails which will be chosen from local nominations and trails benefitting from federal funding. Our goal is to bring new partners together with existing federal, state and private resources in order to promote these trails and to enhance those that are just being developed and to create new ones that we can only now just imagine.

All of them will receive a millennium trails designation. They will be promoted through a web site, a national clearing house, and in tourist materials. And thanks to Secretary Slater's commitment and the President's commitment, many will be eligible for millions of dollars in additional funding.

We see all of this as what the President really envisioned when he created the White House Millennium Program. When we started talking about it, we realized that the millennium was going to come whether we did anything or not as a nation. But what a wonderful opportunity for us to recommit ourselves to what we care about at our local community level and at our national level.

And that is really the idea behind the White House Millennium initiative. And we have adopted a theme -- "Honor the Past - Imagine the Future." I think the trails initiative is a clear example of that. We are honoring the past. Any who walked on this trail, or the C & O Canal, or the

Appalachian Trail or any of the other trails that already exist, you can literally imagine what it was like in the past. But at the same time, you can imagine the future.

What kind of community do we want to live in? What kind of country do we want to have? So we are looking for ways that we can give gifts to the future. And you give a gift every time anybody does weed a flower bed or plant a daffodil, or clean up the trail, as Senator Mikulski said, or bring a child to enjoy nature. That is a gift to the future.

Because of today's announcement, more Americans will be connected to our past. On the Underground Railroad trail for example, you can experience the journey of someone like Harriet Tubman, who risked her life to bring slaves to freedom. Or you could start at Wood River, Missouri and trace Lewis and Clark's epic journey by boat and foot, horseback and bicycle.

Like the railroads brought us together in the 19th century, these trails will bring us together in the 20th and 21st centuries. And more Americans will have the chance to really think through what is important to us about our country. Whether we are traveling the East Coast Greenway from Maine to Florida going through cities or suburbs, or stopping for an extended visit on the B & A Trail right here in Maryland.

The new millennium trails will also connect more of us to our future. You can imagine for example the jazz and more American music trail which some are thinking about and planning. Travelers would visit the cities where jazz was born. Or imagine, the Star Spangled Banner Trail which begins at the famous flag at the Smithsonian which inspired our anthem and traces through battle sites, reaches Fort McHenry and ends at the North Point Battlefield. Or imagine the Erie Canal Trail which goes 325 miles across New York.

Anything is possible in your imagination. This trail was only possible because some people imagined it and other people worked to make it a reality. It will take all of us to translate the ideas of our imaginations into our realities. Certainly because of the President's commitment, Federal agencies like Transportation and Commerce, the Parks Service, the Postal Service and the National Endowment for the Arts stand ready.

It will also take the private sector partners like Rails for Trails Conservancy and American Express which donated \$40,000 to the East Coast Greenway for which I am grateful. And it will take most of all volunteer support which has made the B & A Trail such a success.

I am told that in 1990, a group of Girl Scouts planted 10,000 daffodil bulbs on the B & A Trail in an hour and fifteen minutes. I cannot imagine that. 10,000 bulbs in an hour and fifteen minutes. Were any of you there in 1990? Because I would like to shake your hand. But those bulbs, they grew, they multiplied, they really touched the hearts of everyone who walked by them, or rode a bike by them, or just stopped to enjoy them. And I think about that really as a way of asking all of us what we could accomplish if us, as all Americans, we just planed a few bulbs. Maybe not of daffodils, but of ideas, community spirit, reaching across to embrace our neighbors, of working to really clear a path to our future.

These millennium trails will be very tangible gifts to the future. We will be able to walk on them and hike on them and bike on them. They will be accessible to people of all ages. But in a very important way they represent more than the tangible effect of the trail. They represent a commitment and an investment in what kind of country we want in the next century.

And I was so pleased that all of you could come today and not only honor the past and what has already been accomplished, but imagining the future and taking a few minutes out of your busy daily schedules to be a part of creating the kind of communities and the kind of nation we want to be part of in the years to come. And when we think about it, we are not just doing it for ourselves, but for all these young people who are here today. That is really the gift that I hope all of us can leave as Americans to our next generation. And there isn't any better way to do it than by sharing our beautiful national heritage, our history and imagining our future together.

Thank you so much for being a part of that.

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## MILLENNIUM TRAILS ANNOUNCEMENT

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