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## National Parks Conservation Association

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### *Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine*

During the War of 1812, British forces sailed to Baltimore, Maryland, intent on attacking the city. But Baltimore was defended by Fort McHenry—a star-shaped fort perfectly situated on a point jutting into Baltimore Harbor. On the morning of September 13, 1814, the British navy attacked and bombed the fort for 25 continuous hours.

#### **Rockets Red Glare**

Maryland native Francis Scott Key was detained on a British ship in Baltimore harbor during the bombardment. After the attack ended, Key looked anxiously for the American flag over the fort. Had it been taken? To his relief, he saw the American flag flying above the fort—proof that the British had been repelled. Baltimore and its important port were saved from the threat of a British invasion. Key immediately expressed his gratitude in a poem—a poem that became "The Star-Spangled Banner," our national anthem.

Following the Battle of Baltimore, Fort McHenry remained an active military site for over 100 years. During the Civil War, the fort served as a prison for both Confederate soldiers and sympathizers in Maryland. In 1917, additional buildings were constructed around the star fort, and Fort McHenry was used as a U.S. Army Hospital for World War I soldiers and veterans. The last patient was discharged in 1923.



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National Parks Conservation Association®  
*Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®*

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## Preserving Fort McHenry

In 1925, Congress established Fort McHenry National Park, and the U.S. Army began restoring it to its mid-nineteenth century appearance. This work continued through the 1930s as a project of the Works Progress Administration. By executive order in 1933, Fort McHenry was transferred to the U.S. Department of the Interior, and in 1939 it was redesignated a national monument and historic shrine.

## Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail

Fort McHenry anchors the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, a 560 mile-long land and water route that tells the story of the War of 1812 throughout the Chesapeake Bay region. With both land and water routes, visitors can experience the events of the War of 1812, from the burning of Washington to the bombardment of Fort McHenry and birth of the National Anthem. Along your journey, the Chesapeake landscape provides an abundance of things to do, including hiking, biking, boating, birding, and fishing.



## Preserving and Connecting the Chesapeake Landscape

The national parks along the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail are valuable to the regional economy and treasured landscape. Each year, over 600,000 people visit Fort McHenry, spending over \$39 million.

Along with the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, NPCA is leveraging both new trails to promote land conservation and connectivity along the rivers and tributaries of the Chesapeake watershed. The national park presence in the Chesapeake provides compelling opportunities for advancing landscape conservation to preserve iconic historical and natural treasures.

## Get Involved

With more than 50 national parks in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the National Park Service is responsible for protecting some of our nation's most sacred natural, cultural, and historic places. However, underfunding our national parks threatens what is needed for rangers, interpretation, and other services. Contact your senators and representative and urge them to support full funding of our national parks.

Every action taken helps preserve the national parks of the Chesapeake landscape for future generations. To learn more, visit <http://www.npca.org/about-us/regional-offices/mid-atlantic/virginia> to find additional information, events, and volunteer opportunities.

## Contact Us

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