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| FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 14, 2015  **Non-Profit Acquires 1700-Acre Mountain to Establish Newest West Virginia Public Land**  *Potomac Conservancy’s Purchase of White Horse Mountain Successfully Protects A Significant Treasured DC and West Virginia Getaway Spot From Development Threats* |

Potomac Conservancy purchased White Horse Mountain today, scoring a conservation victory in support of outdoor recreation, historic preservation, water quality, and wildlife habitat protection for a valued landmark directly linked to the Potomac River, the source of drinking water for nearly six million Washington, DC residents.

The acquisition of the property effectively ends long-standing plans for development of the land into 70 residential lots, which would have had direct negative impacts on water quality of the Potomac River. Instead, the property will be transferred to the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources to become a new conservation area that the public can access for hunting, hiking, wildlife watching and more.

Since White Horse Mountain runs parallel to the South Branch River, a major tributary to the Potomac River, everything upstream greatly impacts the quality of water downstream. Conserving forested land on the mountain will directly protect the region’s critical natural resources and rural landscape. Since the mountain is identified as a highly climate-resilient landscape, the acquisition will create a haven for wildlife in the face of climate change.

“With help from generous donors and loyal local residents, we’ve cleared one of the largest hurdles to open this land to the public once again and preserve the beauty and resources of White Horse Mountain,” said Aimee Weldon, Senior Director of Lands at Potomac Conservancy and project manager for the land deal. “But a major hero behind the deal is The Conservation Fund who provided Potomac Conservancy a nearly $2.2 million dollar loan to facilitate the full purchase. Much like a closing on a house, even though the land is purchased, we will still need to continue fundraising to pay off on the loan.”

"We are thrilled to partner with Potomac Conservancy, one of the top conservation organizations in the area if not the country, on this wonderful project,” said Reggie Hall, Director of Land Conservation Loans at The Conservation Fund. “The protection of White Horse Mountain will provide multiple benefits for wildlife and communities, and we are pleased that we were able to provide timely financing to enable the Conservancy’s purchase.”

The acquisition came after Potomac Conservancy exceeded their goal of raising $35,000 from a public [crowdsourcing campaign](https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/save-white-horse-mountain). The majority of the total $3.2 million needed to complete the purchase of White Horse Mountain will come from private donors, foundations, and the loan from The Conservation Fund.

**BACKGROUND:** Founded in 1993, Potomac Conservancy is a member-supported non-profit that works to ensure the Potomac River boasts clean water, healthy lands, and vibrant communities. The Conservancy fights for improved water quality through conservation and advocacy, and empowers local landowners, volunteers, activists, members, and partners to lead the charge for clean streams and safe drinking water.

**For more information on WHite Horse Mountain,** please visit [www.potomac.org/whitehorse](http://www.potomac.org/whitehorse) or contact Patricia Brooks at 202-351-1757.

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