

TOURISM -Government Island

191 Coal Landing Road | Stafford, VA 22554

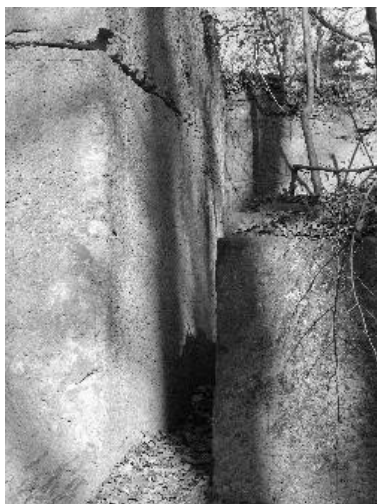
Mid-Mar. to Oct., 8:00am - 8:00pm

Nov to Mid-Mar, 8:00am - 5:30pm

See park guidelines below.

BRIEF HISTORY

Government Island is an historic 18th and 19th century quarry site that provided Aquia sandstone for the construction of the White House and the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Government Island was purchased by Pierre L'Enfant on behalf of the federal government in 1791 to provide stone to build the nation's new capital city - Washington, D.C. The Island was first known as "Public Quarry", as it was owned by the federal government to build public buildings.



trenches. Chisel marks still visible in the stone.

One stone quarry on the island.

Hand-carved

GOVERNMENT ISLAND TODAY

Now a natural park preserve and archaeological site, Government Island contains a trail and interpretive signs to help depict its rich, nationally significant history. The first portion of the trail is paved, the second segment is a wooden boardwalk over the tidal creeks, and the third section is a natural hiking trail (footpath) around the island. The total length of the trail is approximately 1.5 miles (from the parking lot, to and around the island, and back). [Note: The first two portions of this trail leading up to the edge of the island, which include some interpretive signs, are handicap accessible. The footpath on the island consists of uneven ground, covered with a bed of mulch.] In addition to the history interpreted at this site, Government Island is an ideal location to observe aquatic and native plants, as well as birds and other wildlife. The park address, hours, and rules are listed further down this page.



RELATED SITE - Historic Aquia Church

While in Stafford, if you'd like to see an example of how Aquia sandstone was used, visit the historic [Aquia Church](#). Built between 1751-1757, Aquia sandstone is visible in many features of this beautiful building, including quoins, keystones, and lintels.

HONORS & DESIGNATIONS

Government Island was listed on the [National Register](#) in April 2007. The Government Island trail is a designated site on the [Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail \(PHNST\)](#) of the National Park Service.

PARK INFORMATION & HOURS

Government Island and its trail are maintained by [Stafford County Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities](#), (540) 658-4871. Please note: There are **No restrooms** on-site at this time. The Government Island trail is **HOURS:** Mid-March to October, 8:00am - 5:30pm, to Mid-March, 8:00am - 5:30pm.



open to the public daily.
8:00am - 8:00pm. November

PARK GUIDELINES

Government Island is an archaeological and natural site. Help protect it for future visitors:

1. Stay on the trails.

2. Leash pets; clean up after them.
3. Take all litter with you. (Pack it in, pack it out.)
4. Do not feed or disturb wildlife.
5. No bicycles, ATV's or motorcycles.
6. No fishing or hunting.
7. No launching or landing of watercraft.
8. No fires.
9. No smoking beyond the parking lot.
10. No trespassing after dark.
11. Do not erase traces of Stafford County's past:
 - a. NO RELIC HUNTING.
 - b. NO STONE REMOVAL.

Handicap Accessibility: The portion of the trail on the island is not wheelchair accessible. The content for the signs located on the island portion of the trail can be provided upon request.

*Trail closes occasionally for ice, snow or flooding.

**CAUTION: This is a rustic park. Hiking may involve moderate to vigorous exercise. Enter at your own risk, and be aware of uneven ground.

MAP & PARK DIRECTIONS

The historic Government Island is located off of U.S. Route 1, just south of the historic Aquia Church. From I-95, take Exit 143-A towards Aquia. Turn right on Route 1 South. Follow Route 1 approximately 1.3 miles. Turn left on Coal Landing Road. Follow Coal Landing Rd. approximately 0.5 miles. The Government Island trailhead will be on the left. Click here to see a [MAP of Stafford County](#) showing Government Island and two other designated sites on the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.