



**PRESS RELEASE
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New Executive Director Selected to Lead Maryland Milestones

Meagan Baco will take the helm of Anacostia Trails State Heritage Area

The Board of Directors of Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc. (ATHA) is thrilled to announce Meagan Baco as the organization's new Executive Director. Baco was selected for their state and national professional experience and creative and inclusive agenda. Aaron Marcavitch, who successfully expanded the organization's impact for the past 10 years, is now Executive Director at Landmarks Connecticut.

ATHA, Inc. manages one of Maryland's thirteen certified heritage tourism areas and is known for its Maryland Milestones programming, which celebrates the region's distinctive history, from the Battle of Bladensburg to Route 1's roadside neon signs and murals. The non-profit organization supports museums and historic sites, small businesses and main streets, and parks and trails through grant-making, tourism marketing, and partnerships with local municipalities. ATHA, Inc. is headquartered in The Annalie and Soren Ebbeler Maryland Milestones Heritage Center, located in the heart of hip and historic Hyattsville, Maryland—just one of the towns and communities that the Heritage Areas serves and supports throughout the more than 100 square mile heritage area.

Ariel Trahan, President of the Managing Board of Directors of ATHA, Inc., stated, "In this, our 20th year as a certified state heritage area, ATHA must meet new challenges in social equity and public health. We believe that as Executive Director, Baco can make the natural and cultural assets of Northern Prince George's County a relevant part of these much-needed discussions and opportunities for community building."

Previously, Baco lead Preservation Maryland's communications, public history, and internship programs during a period of unprecedented organizational growth, which included a national historic trades training program and international podcast. As a trained preservationist and planner, they served as project manager of several diverse public history projects, including interpretive signage on labor history throughout the Jones Falls area of Baltimore City, a multi-media women's history project called Ballot & Beyond, and the groundbreaking Maryland LGBTQ History Context Statement. Baco's public history projects have been recognized with awards from Maryland Historical Trust, Historic Annapolis, and Baltimore Heritage, Inc.

Baco managed the Waxter Memorial Internship Program at Preservation Maryland and mentored dozens of students from across the country, tackling a massive digital archiving project and a joint

architectural internship with AIA Maryland's Historic Resources Committee. Baco is a Fellow of the ARCUS Preservation Leadership program and has practical experience in historic architecture, historic preservation, and legislative advocacy. They are a frequent guest lecturer, including at the UMD School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation and conferences across the country. Baco was a founding board member of the Friends of Greenbelt Theatre and Painting for Preservation.

Upon accepting the position, Baco stated, *“Heritage tourism represents the opportunity to explore a place through time—right up to the day you are experiencing it. You are part of this story.”* Continuing, *Baco said, “ATHA has resources and partnerships that must be leveraged for telling authentic history, supporting local businesses, and making connections between visitors and residents alike in service of creating healthier and happier communities.”*

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Maryland Milestones, a brand established in 2012 by Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc., highlights the first and unique moments which have occurred in the Maryland Certified Anacostia Trails Heritage Area. This program brings information about these milestones to the public and makes connections between the history, culture, and nature of the region. Additionally, the Maryland Milestones brand emphasizes the importance travel, trade, and communication have played in the region – through turnpikes, highways, parkways, aviation, streetcars, telegraphs, and train travel. This program involves updating signage, creating information kiosks, building a heritage center, and development of interpretive heritage routes. Plan your visit at: marylandmilestones.org.