OCTOBER 2001

Lake Fairfax Park

Master Plan Revision

Approved 10/24/01

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fairfax County Park Authority
Lake Fairfax Park Master Plan Revision

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The Fairfax County Park Authority acknowledges the special efforts of the Lake Fairfax Park Citizens Task Force in developing a recommendation for this plan.

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Attachment: Conceptual Development Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose and Plan Description

The purpose of this master plan revision is to update the plan that was first approved in June 1979. Since approved, this plan has served as a guide for all planning of the site. Many of the formerly proposed facilities remain un-built and the plan seems out of place within the community as it is today. In addition, numerous proposals have been received over recent years with ideas for change at Lake Fairfax. This master plan revision is a means to update the plan by removing un-built elements and possibly add other new elements. When approved, this document will serve as a guide for all future planning on the site and should be referred to before any planning and design projects are initiated.

The plan will address new conceptual development, describing what facilities should be developed based on a variety of factors, how they fit into the established plan, where they will be constructed and how these facilities will be operated in conjunction with other areas of the park and existing uses.

B. Property Description

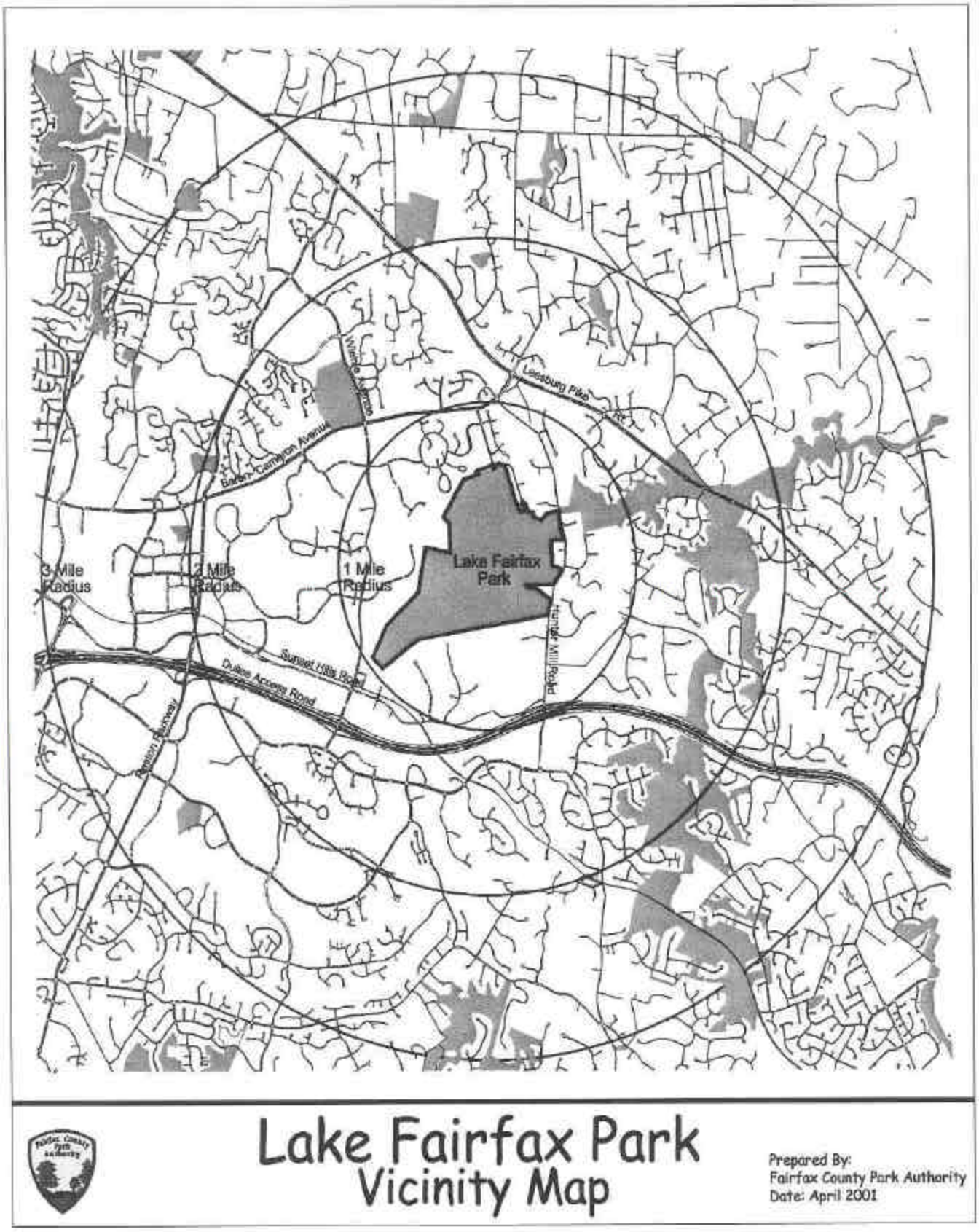
Lake Fairfax Park is approximately 479 acres located in the Hunter Mill Supervisory District at 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive in Reston, Virginia (See vicinity map on page 6). It is comprised of a variety of natural habitats in conjunction with intensively developed recreational facilities. These facilities include a theme swimming pool, picnic areas, parking lots, athletic fields, campgrounds, playground, open play areas and associated administrative/maintenance buildings. In total, these facilities presently occupy less than one-third of the park acreage. Approximately 137 acres of the park are developable for recreational uses, mainly in locations such as the park core area, the multi-purpose and athletic field areas, the maintenance area and the camping areas. The remaining acreage is restricted from development because of a combination of factors such as unsuitable soils, excessive slope and vegetative cover with the designation of a Resource Management Area.

Vehicular access to the park is from Lake Fairfax Drive off Route 606, Baron Cameron Avenue. The western boundary of the park lies along the community of Reston where some walk-in access trails are utilized. The site is bounded on the north, south and west by single family, townhouse and apartment residences and a mix of commercial and office space. The eastern boundary is located adjacent to Hunter Mill Road and a number of single family residences.

Streams lace throughout the park with Colvin Run, the major drainage way. Approximately one fifth to one quarter of the park lies within the one-hundred year flood plain. The lake within the park is about 20 acres in size.

C. Park History

The first owners of record for this property were John Warner and John Grant, who were granted adjacent tracts on Difficult Run by the Northern Neck Proprietary in 1731. Grant received 825 acres that extended southwest to just south of the present day location of Lake Fairfax and northeast to the opposite side of the Sugarlands Rolling Road, now known as Leesburg Pike. Warner's 600-acre grant lay to the west and south of Grant's. Grant and his wife sold their tract in 1732 to John Colvill and John Lewis. Warner sold his tract to Catesby Cocke in 1741.


Lake Fairfax Park
3 Mile Radius
2 Mile Radius
1 Mile Radius
Leesburg Pike
Baron Cameron Avenue
Wiehle Avenue
Hunter Mill Road
Sunset Hills Road
Dulles Access Road
Reston Parkway
Lake Fairfax Park
Vicinity Map
Prepared By:
Fairfax County Park Authority
Date: April 2001

By the turn of the 19th century, Jonathon Swift had acquired much of the land that had been contained in these two grants. His estate, called "Long Glades," contained 1,357 acres in 1824. Court minutes for 1810 state that the house and property of Swift had burned and were completely destroyed.

During the 19th century, the land that was to become Lake Fairfax Park came under the ownership of two principal landowners. By the middle of the century, the northern portion of this land (generally north of Colvin Run) was part of the estate of Thornton Johnson while Edward Johnson owned the remainder of what would become the park.

During the 1920's, Joseph Augustus Wheeler acquired the majority of these properties. Based on local newspaper accounts, J.A. Wheeler was a successful dairy farmer and an active member of the Colvin Run/ Brown's Chapel community. He reportedly had a prize-winning dairy herd and raised Percheron draft horses. He owned a milling business, a farms goods supply store, was an agent for Reo automobiles, and sold horses. He was active in local citizens associations and in local and national politics. Furthermore, it seems that he hosted numerous events such as dances, horse shows and tournaments at his apparently prosperous farm. Not long before he died, Wheeler also applied for a zoning application for a commercial airstrip. This landing strip was located where the athletic fields are located today.

J.A.Wheeler passed away in 1954. Mack S. Crippen, Jr. and his wife, Irene B. Crippen assembled property largely from parcels purchased from relatives who had inherited the land from J. A. Wheeler. In 1958 Crippen proposed the construction of a dam to create a lake approximately 20 acres in area. Lake Fairfax was then created, and the Crippens developed the property as a recreation area. This parcel containing 292 acres was conveyed to the Fairfax County Park Authority in 1966. Inez Thew Hill conveyed an additional 129 acres to the Park Authority in 1972 to make up the majority of acreage at Lake Fairfax Park.

D. Historic Resources at Lake Fairfax Park

The land records associated with this park provide little direct evidence of historic resources on this property. There is no evidence of buildings on the property prior to or during its ownership by the Swift family in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Structures shown on the 1854 plat of division of the Thornton Johnson estate were not located on parkland. Similarly, the only structure shown on the 1911 plat accompanying the division of the estate of Edward Johnson was located south of the park. Tax records, however, show that by 1861 there were improvements on two locations on Edward Johnson's holdings. The principal improvements valued at $600 were within the 422 acres owned in full by Johnson. The 1862 McDowell Map shows the Edward Johnson residence just west of Hunter Mill Road. The location of these structures is the present-day location of the Bachman farm, just south of the park. It is possible that some of the mid-19th century structures are still standing on that privately owned land. The 1861 tax record for Edward Johnson shows that secondary improvements valued at $200 were located somewhere on the 207 acres conveyed to Johnson in trust for his wife. This latter parcel was completely within the present-day boundaries of the park. The improvements may have been agricultural buildings or dwellings for tenants, slaves, or laborers. There is, however, no known documentary evidence of their precise location within those 207 acres. The only clue may be the existence of a road that ran east west between Lots 1 and 2 of the Johnson estate. It is possible that this road led to buildings on that part of the estate.

The two small parcels in the interior of the park were also very likely improved. One, sold to James Washington in 1921, is now owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority. The other was sold to Ralph Adams in 1923 and now belongs to the Board of Supervisors. A cellar hole and a surface scatter of domestic and architectural artifacts are evidence of domestic sites on these parcels. No

attempt has yet been made to date these resources, but the land records would indicate that the dwellings were occupied in the 1920s. Nevertheless, because of the evidence of earlier improvements on the estate, it is possible that these dwellings were of greater age and had been occupied at an earlier time by tenants or farm-workers. Further research on these sites is needed.

More recent land records indicate that improvements to the property were confined to those buildings present on the Crippen property when the Fairfax County Park Authority purchased the land. Wheeler, the previous owner, evidently had his home, farm buildings, and a mill and farm-goods store north of the park property. Improvements dating to the Crippen period of ownership included three tenant houses, a pool and bathhouse, and a variety of barns, sheds, and storage buildings. Based on the descriptions in a 1965 appraisal of the property, these were all of relatively recent construction and of little historical significance.

As of the present, few historic resources have been recorded on the park and the land records yield little evidence that additional resources may be located. Nevertheless, the known resources should be protected and the lack of documentary evidence of additional resources does not insure their absence. Because land records do not routinely record the locations of all improvements, the absence of record does not necessarily guarantee the absence of resources on the ground. This is especially true in the case of outbuildings, servant and slave quarters, and tenancies.

II. PARK CLASSIFICATION

A. Multiple Resource Park

Lake Fairfax Park falls under Fairfax County Park Authority classification 4.4, Multiple Resource Park, which provides a diversity of recreational opportunities in both natural settings and intensely developed indoor or outdoor facilities which can accommodate large numbers of people without significant deterioration of the recreation experience. These parks are located throughout the county. This category of park is oriented to activities that involve an individual or group for a time period ranging from most of the day to a week and which may attract large numbers of spectators or participants.

Facilities may include complexes of 10 - 12 lighted tournament level athletic fields and special features such as miniature trains, carousels and miniature golf.

III. PARK PURPOSE & SIGNIFICANCE

A. Park Purpose

Park purpose statements are intended to provide an umbrella for planning and decision making. If a proposed use conflicts with any one of the purposes listed, it will be considered an incompatible use. By establishing park purpose, future plans can remain flexible, as legislative requirements and visitor preference change.

The purpose of Lake Fairfax Park is to:

* preserve, protect and restore natural resources
* preserve and protect cultural resources
* provide active recreation for all county citizens
* generate revenue to support the operation, maintenance and restoration of park resources and facilities

It may appear that some of these statements are in conflict with each other. The purpose statements are not intended to be mutually exclusive. They are intended to be integrated into a common purpose of protecting the existing resources, providing recreation and generating revenue.

B. Park Significance

Lake Fairfax Park is important to the Fairfax County park system because it provides

geographically unique water-based recreational opportunities with the Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole (a highly successful outdoor theme pool facility) and other lake activities. Other facilities unique to the area include a carousel, picnic facilities for large groups and campgrounds for every leisure experience from individual tent campsites to group campgrounds and large recreational vehicle sites. The park provides for storm water and sediment control and provides aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitats in an urban area.

IV. EXISTING FACILITIES

A. Listing of Existing Facilities

The following facilities are currently existing at Lake Fairfax Park:

* Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole
* Park Offices/Restrooms
* Carousel
* Boat Rental
* Group Picnic Areas
* Picnic Shelter Rental
* Athletic Fields - Lighted & Unlighted
* Camping Area
* Group Camping Area
* Outdoor Amphitheater
* Parking Areas

V. EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

A. Natural Elements

1. Topography

A slope analysis of the park was completed that defined slopes of 0-5%, 5-15% and over 15%. At least one half of the park has slopes greater than 15%. Those areas which are in the 0-5% range are primarily along streams and on the tops of ridges and comprise approximately 30% of the site. The remaining 20% of the site has slopes of 5-15%. These are primarily transitional areas.

2. Soils

A total of 11 soil types are found within Lake Fairfax Park. A brief summary of each soils type is included. (see soils map page 10)

a. Mixed Alluvial Land, soil type #1A (0-2% slopes)

This soil is derived from recent soil materials that have washed from the uplands and deposited along the small stream bottoms. It is subject to frequent flooding and needs drainage in places.

b. Worsham Silt Loam, soil type #8B

Worsham silt loam is a poorly drained soil that occurs along the foot of slopes and upper drainage ways. It is formed from fine soil materials which have washed from the Piedmont uplands.

c. Glenville Silt Loam, soil type #10B

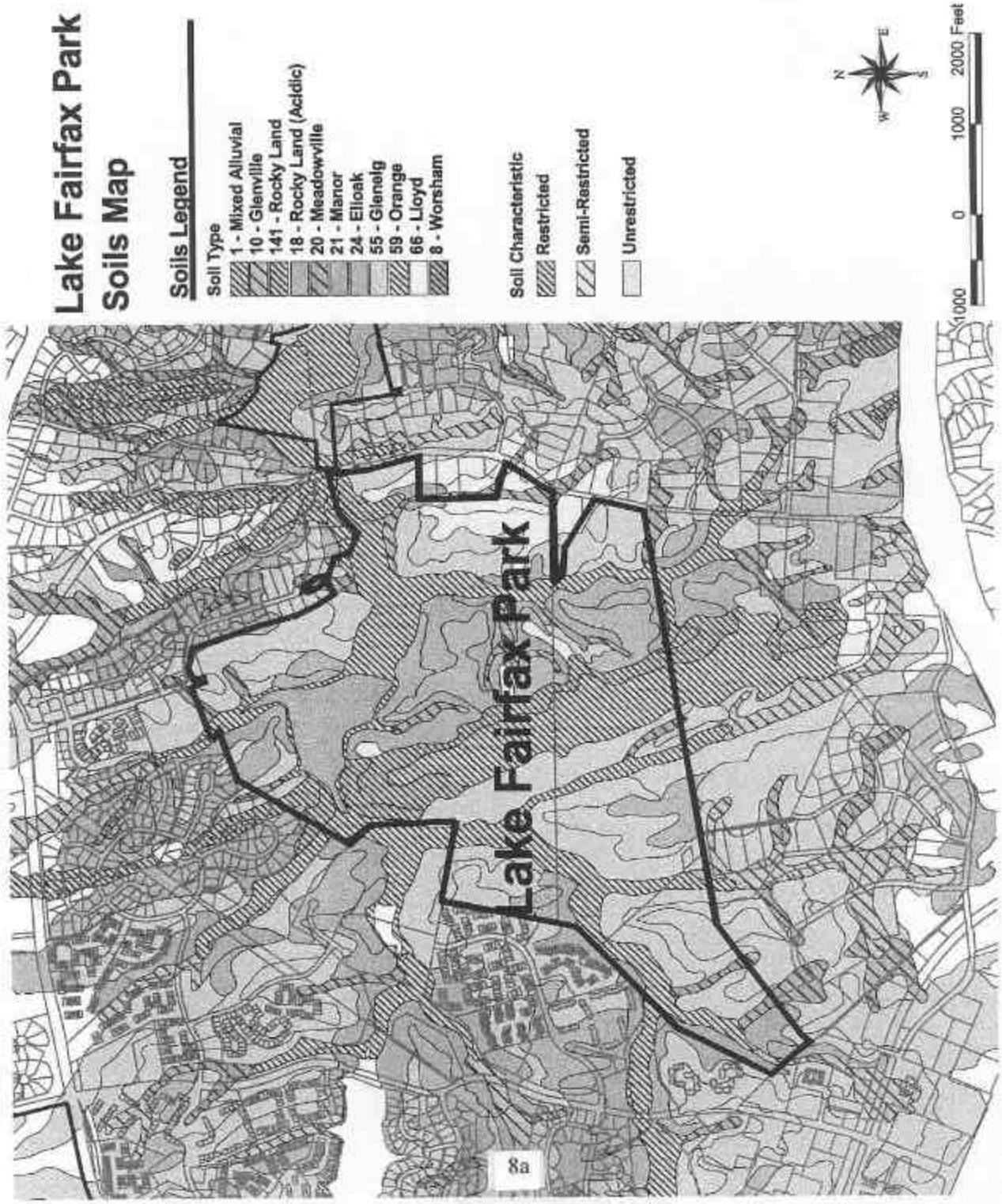
This soil is deep, moderately well to somewhat poorly drained soil that occupies depressions near drainage heads and along upper drainage ways. It is derived from materials washed from the Piedmont uplands.

d. Rocky Land (acidic rock) (rolling phase), soil type #18C1

Rocky land, rolling phase, consists principally of areas so characterized by rock outcroppings, loose stones and cobbles as to make soil differences insignificant.

e. Meadowville Silt Loam, soil type #20B

This soil is a deep, brown, well to moderately well drained, friable fertile soil that is derived from recent colluvial (rock bits and soil accumulated at the foot of a


Lake Fairfax Park
Soils Map
Soils Legend
Soil Type
1 - Mixed Alluvial
10 - Glenville
141 - Rocky Land
18 - Rocky Land (Acidic)
20 - Meadowville
21 - Manor
24 - Elloak
55 - Glenelg
59 - Orange
66 - Lloyd
8 - Worsham
Soil Characteristic
Restricted
Semi-Restricted
Unrestricted
N
W
E
S
1000
0
1000
2000 Feet
Lake Fairfax Park
8a

slope) materials which have washed mainly out of the Glenelg, Elioak and Manor soil areas of the Piedmont uplands. It occurs mainly in depressions at the heads of drainage areas.

f. Manor Silt Loam (rolling phase), soil type #21C1,2

This silt loam is a soft porous, highly micaceous, weakly developed soil that is formed from quartz serecite schist rock materials. It is excessively drained and has a low water holding capacity and natural fertility. The soil is shallow over deep weathered rock materials and is strongly acid in reaction.

g. Manor Silt Loam (hilly phase), soil type #21D1,2

This soil is a strongly sloping, excessively drained, weakly developed, high micaceous soil that is derived from quartz serecite schist rock materials. The soil has a low water holding capacity because of the steep slopes. Its natural fertility and organic matter content are low and productivity is low. Reaction is very strongly acid (pH 4.5-5.0). Eroded areas are best for forest.

h. Elioak Silt Loam (undulating & rolling phase), soil type #24B1,2 & 24C1,2

Elioak silt loam, undulating phase is a deep, well-drained soil that is formed from the weathered products of quartz serecite schist rock materials. It occurs mostly on ridge tops in association with the Glenelg and Manor soils of the Piedmont uplands. Workability, productivity and water holding capacity are good. Natural fertility is medium to low and the soil reaction is strongly acid (pH 5.0-5.5).

i. Rocky Land (basic rock), soil type #41C, D

This is a land type soil which is influenced by many rock outcrops and loose diabase and syenite boulders. From 20 to 50% of the land is too stony for crop production. This land type is best suited for forests but trees grow very slowly. It is suited for park sites and recreational areas.

j. Glenelg Silt Loam (undulating phase), soil type #55B1,2

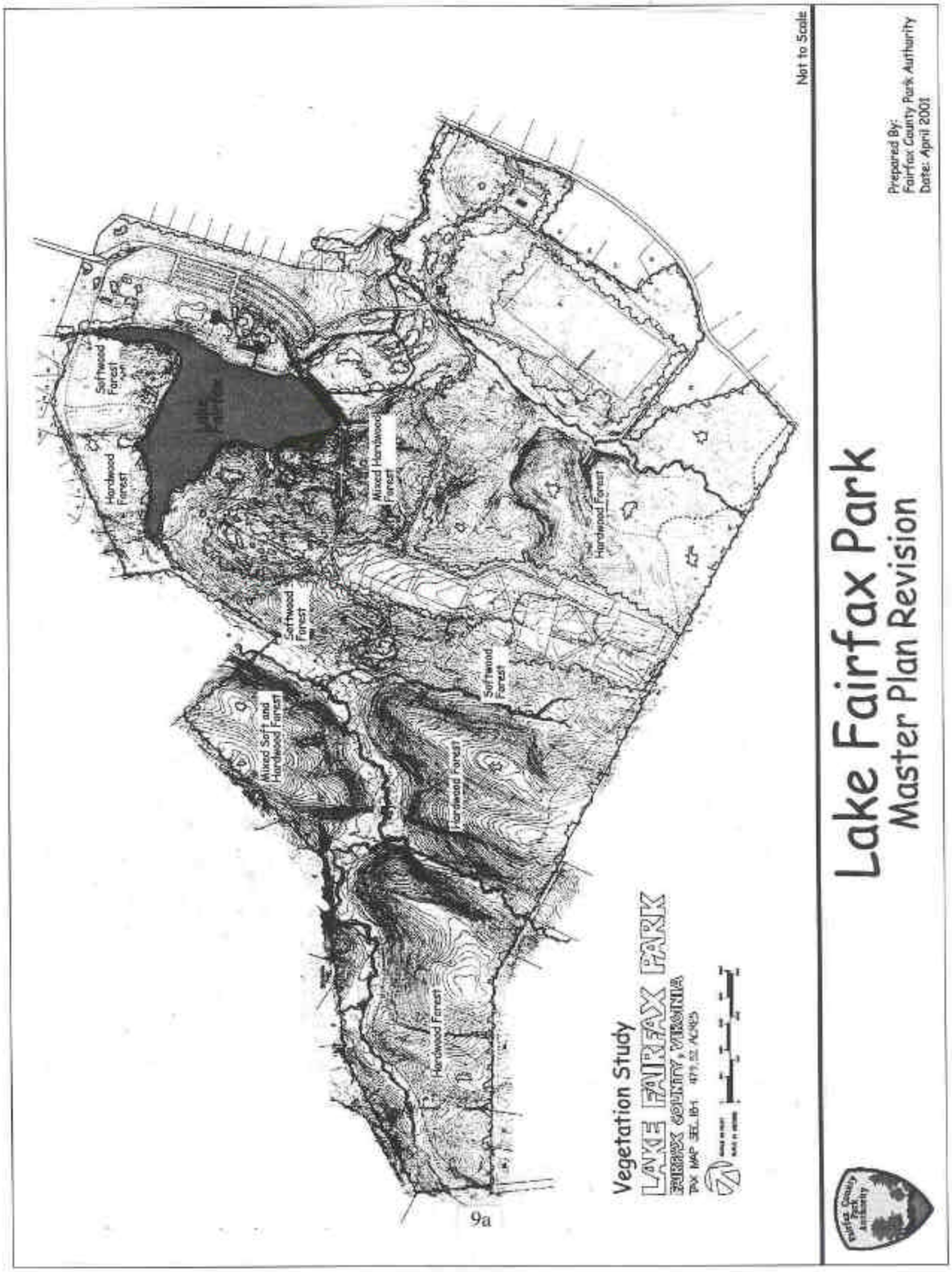
This is a brown, friable, well-drained soil that is formed from quartz serecite schist rock materials. It occurs on favorable topography, is low to fair in organic matter and natural fertility and because of its good physical conditions it is one of the most productive soils in the county.

k. Orange Silt Loam (undulating phase), soil type #59B1,2

Orange silt loam, undulating phase, is a moderately well-drained, light colored soil that has a clay pan in the subsoil. It is developed from basic rock materials and is less than 50 inches thick over hard bedrock in most places. The soil is best suited for forest.

l. Lloyd Loam (undulating phase), soil type #66B1,2

This soil type is a deep, well-drained, red soil that is derived from the weathered products of mixed basic and acidic rock materials. Workability is fair and productivity, fertility and conservability are good.


Softwood Forest
Hardwood Forest
Lake Fairfax
Mixed Hardwood Forest
Softwood Forest
Mixed Soft and Hardwood Forest
Softwood Forest
Hardwood Forest
Hardwood Forest
Hardwood Forest
Vegetation Study
LAKE FAIRFAX PARK
FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA
TAX MAP SEC. 18-1 479.52 ACRES
Not to Scale
Lake Fairfax Park
Master Plan Revision
Prepared By:
Fairfax County Park Authority
Date: April 2001

9a

3. Vegetation/Natural Resources

There are several different types of forest and natural land cover in Lake Fairfax Park (See map on page 12). They vary in age from old field with emerging Virginia pines to Chestnut Oak and White oak over a hundred years old. All of these cover types provide housing, food and other resources needed by animals and insects. Some of the plants contributing to the habitat are unusual in their own right.

In suburban or developing regions, the habitat value of any land cover increases with the size of uninterrupted area. That is, the larger the block, the more valuable it is to wildlife. The eastern half of the park was labeled as a Managed Conservation Area in the original Master Plan. While there have been some incursions for sewer construction and Colvin Run is slowly widening, the majority of this section of forest remains contiguous, and therefore very valuable as habitat. However, even a forest this large will suffer from entropy and will need energy input in the form of active human management. This management is necessary to prevent the incursion of invasive exotic plants or damage from insects like Gypsy moth.

Most of the soils in this park are not very fertile and several of them also provide structural challenges to trees, as well as to buildings. The presence of these soils limits the tree species that are likely to establish themselves to some of the more hardy and slower growing. These include several Oaks as well as the Black Gum and several Hickories. These upper canopy trees, in turn, moderate the soils and climate in ways that create niches for sets of understory trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants.

A recent inventory found great variety in the herbaceous and shrub layers of the forest. Examples of unusual species such as the Fringe Tree were found, as well as many of the more common wildflowers and shrubs. Both High and Low bush Blueberry, 3 types of Viburnum, Mt. Laurel, both Solomon's Seal and False Solomon's Seal, and Spotted Wintergreen were found through much of the forest. Japanese honeysuckle and other invasive exotics are also present throughout the park but have not yet become a large problem in most of the forests.

There are also limited areas of what is commonly referred to as 'Old Field' habitat. This generally is used to label areas that are in the transition period between meadow and forest. This type of habitat provides food for many types of wildlife and insects. Many butterflies and moths rely on the flowers and grasses for food. Some species require specific plants for survival. For example, Monarch butterfly caterpillars require members of the Milkweed plant family as food. Other meadow grasses and wildflowers hold onto their seed into the winter and early spring when it becomes sustenance for birds such as Field Sparrows and Goldfinches. A control program may be needed to address invasives in areas that could be valuable Old Field but which are currently being invaded by Russian Olive.

The forest is complemented by the presence of Colvin Run and the lake. There are several unnamed tributaries entering Colvin Run both above and below the lake. In general, although down-cut, these tributaries have high water quality. Future development may cause degradation of these streams unless adequate storm-water management is provided on upstream development. The main stem of Colvin Run has suffered from past development and is working towards geo-morphological stability.

While in this transitional phase, caused by increased storm-water runoff from upstream developments, the stream is down-cutting and widening its channel. The material created by this erosion creates significant amounts of sediment and will be carried into the lake.

The lake has been dredged in the past. If we can expect to maintain the enjoyment of recreational activities on the lake, portions will need to be dredged again within the next 10 years. This may require significant disturbance of forest and/or facilities along the shoreline. At the time of dredging, it may be appropriate to design and install a sediment trapping facility such as a forebay at the point where Colvin Run enters the lake. This facility will necessarily include an access road and a dredging platform.

B. Prehistoric Cultural Resources

Three Native American sites have been recorded on Lake Fairfax Park. All three sites were recorded during a 1979 pedestrian survey of the park. No subsurface testing or archaeological excavations have been conducted on these sites. All three yielded small amounts of stone debris that were the results of the manufacture of stone tools. One site yielded a fragment of a projectile point that probably dates from 3000 to 6000 years ago. Without further testing, it is not possible to determine whether these were small hunting and/or tool making stations or the sites of larger and longer occupations. At least one of the sites is located in a disturbed area (the picnic area). The present conditions of the other two sites are not known.

Several factors argue for the likelihood of there being additional sites on the park. First the presence of several known sites is a good indicator that Native Americans favored the local environs. Second, the area would have been favored because of the proximity of well-watered streams and the local topography which offers some relatively level areas for settlement and/or use. Finally, the presence of soapstone in the vicinity of the park would have made this location particularly desirable. Before they learned how to manufacture pottery, Native Americans who lived in the Chesapeake region approximately 3000 years ago manufactured bowls from soapstone. These soapstone artifacts represent a significant technological innovation for local prehistoric residents. Many archaeologists believe that these stone containers reflect a change in the methods for storing and preparing foods. They also signal a change from small, mobile social groups to larger, more sedentary communities. In addition, there is ample evidence that these vessels were valuable trade commodities throughout the region. Sources of soapstone, therefore, were valued locations and Native American sites are commonly found in the vicinity of these sources.

VI. PARK OPERATIONS

A. Overview

The size and diversity of Lake Fairfax Park allow it to serve many roles in the County's park system. It is host to extensive natural resource areas as well as some of the most intensively used recreation facilities within the County. It contains some facilities that cater to a local community market as well as some facilities found nowhere else in the park system. Unique destination facilities like the Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole and the campground have countywide audience appeal and also appeal to tourists visiting the Washington, D.C. area. As the largest park in the Reston/ Herndon area, it is one of the few locations in the park system with the capacity to handle large special events such as the annual 4th of July celebration and fireworks. The multi-purpose character of Lake Fairfax Park makes it a unique component in the Park Authority's leisure service delivery and open space preservation system.

Since its acquisition in 1966, Lake Fairfax has also been an important component of the Park Authority's fee-based recreational service offerings. It is the only non-golf facility ever

acquired by the Park Authority through revenue bond financing. Currently, it is one of only thirteen sites throughout the park system that generates over $1,000,000 in user fee revenues annually.

B. Primary Recreational Use Areas

A summary of the main use areas at Lake Fairfax and their significance to the multi-purpose character of the parks' operations is shown below.

A Summary of Primary Recreational Use Areas Currently Existing at Lake Fairfax Park	
Recreational Use Area	**Significance**
Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole	**Unique facility with Countywide audience appeal, key facility in FCPA's revenue fund operations.**
Carousel	**Serves local community audience, picnickers, and users of the Water Mine where it serves as value-added entertainment attraction.**
Boat Rental/Dock Area	**Serves local community audience. Provides added entertainment attraction to picnickers and Water Mine users. Important resource for local fisherman.**
Group Picnic Areas/Picnic Shelters	**Provides free picnic areas for the local community and reserveable shelters used by a countywide audience.**
Campground	**Tent and RV camping serving local groups and tourists.**
Athletic Fields	**Local community adult softball and youth soccer. The only facility providing cricket fields throughout the park system.**
Open Play Area (Multi-Purpose Fields)	**Local community and countywide special events. One of the few large open play spaces for informal recreation in park system.**

C. Use

Although Lake Fairfax is open year-round, the majority of use occurs in the nine-month season extending from March through November. Total park attendance in FY 2000 was 775,953, of which 97% occurred during the March through November time period. A summary of use in the primary recreational areas of the park is as follows.

Core area entertainment facilities. Core area entertainment facilities include The Water Mine, carousel and boat rental/dock area. The majority of users in this area come to use the Water Mine, but the carousel and boat rental areas capture spin-off use which adds value to the users' recreational experience and extends their stay time. The boat rental/dock area and carousel also attract other park users including picnickers and an avid group of fisherman. The lakefront fishing and boating activities occur from March through November, while the carousel and Water Mine operate a shorter summer season that extends from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Built to replace the parks' former outdoor pool, The Water Mine is the Park Authority's only leisure pool, offering up-to-date aquatic entertainment in a waterpark setting. The facility appeals to young families with elementary school-aged and younger children. A majority of The Water Mine's visitors reside within a 10-mile radius of the park, although a significant number come from other portions of Fairfax County as well. Popularity of this facility has exceeded all expectations since it opened in the summer of 1997. Attendance for the summer 2000 season was 100,723, about six times the number that attended the old pool in its last year of operation.

Campground. The campground operates in a nine-month season from March through November. Despite the fact that campground amenities are relatively Spartan, the popularity of this facility has surged in recent years. Attendance has grown 32% between FY 1998 and FY 2000. Attendance in FY

2000 was 28,754. About 70% of campground attendance comes from outside the Washington, D.C. metro area.

Group picnic area and picnic shelters. This portion of the park includes reservable picnic shelters and picnic areas that are available for rent as well as that other picnic areas that are available free of charge. An adjacent playground serves the families who use this area. A local community clientele generally enjoys the free picnic areas while groups from throughout the county use the rented shelters and areas. The picnic season runs from April through October.

Athletic Fields. The parks' athletic fields currently service local adult softball and youth soccer groups from Reston, Herndon and Great Falls during an eight-month period from April through November. Four area cricket groups also use the multi-purpose fields.

Events and camps. The size and diversity of the park also make it an ideal location for special events and summer camps. The park accommodates a diverse schedule of events annually, which currently include: a walk-a-thon, scholastic cross-country meets, mountain bike races, outdoor equipment shows and the 4th of July fireworks. Lake Fairfax is also a popular site for children's summer camps, including soccer, scout and nature camps. Throughout the summer, the Water Mine is also a once a summer destination for those from other camps and daycare centers throughout northern Virginia.

D. Funding

Annual operation and maintenance of Lake Fairfax Park is funded through two sources. The County's General Fund (referred to as Fund 001) pays for general grounds maintenance. All other functions within the park are funded through the Park Revenue Fund (known as Fund 170), which is derived from fees paid by park users. Since FY 1998, County General Fund (001) support of Lake Fairfax' park operations has declined 18%, making the park increasingly reliant on revenue generated from user fees for annual operation and maintenance. In FY 2000, 68% of the parks' annual operating expenses were generated from user fees.

E. Operational Issues

Infrastructure in Poor Condition. The park office no longer meets the needs of the current operation. There is inadequate office and customer service space. The building is in very poor condition and lacks proper security and storage. Public rest room facilities at the office and throughout the park are in poor condition and very undersized.

Water Mine Facilities are Inadequate. The Water Mine capacity of 800 is far too small to meet demand. Patrons are often denied admittance due to the capacity issue. This occurs as early as 1 1/2 hours after opening. The line to enter the Water Mine can take 1 to 2 hours after capacity is met. The Water Mine does not product the non-admission revenues it is capable of due to lack of vending/ concession space.

Lake Quality Issues. Need to establish a management program to create sustainable fisheries stock. This would be related to and perhaps, include development of the forebays and a nutrient reduction or control plan in partnership with upstream neighbors.

Campground Lacks Amenities. The campground lacks multiple hook-up options at each individual campsite to include sewer and water. Currently, the campground only provides electrical service. The current electrical sites do not meet demand and should be upgraded to 50 amp service. The campground provides a very important service as one of only 2 campgrounds in Fairfax County that handles RV's. It also provides the best opportunity for substantial year round revenue increase.

Poor Trail System. Currently, there are no internal trails to enable patrons to move safely from one activity to another. There are no trails or walkways within the parking areas to ensure safe passage from your car to any activity areas. The park is not connected to the adjacent neighborhoods by trails. There is demand for additional trails to include improved nature trails and a trail to circle the lake.

Poor Road Conditions and Road System. The main park roads are in poor condition and inadequate to meet demand. The current entrance is not adequate and is poorly designed. The road to the multi-purpose field is not two lanes wide. The main bridge below the dam is in poor condition and lacks a segregated path for pedestrian passage. The core area parking is currently gravel and is not properly designed to handle the current use.

Neighbors. The introduction of new neighbors to the south on the Bachman property will impact operations. The close proximity of existing neighbors needs to be addressed when planning any changes to the park. The traffic impact of any new activities needs to be addressed as it concerns the neighbors.

VII. CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A. Citizen Task Force Recommendations on Conceptual Development Plan

A Lake Fairfax Task Force made up of park user groups, neighbors and citizens was established in October 2000 to provide recommendations to the Park Authority Board for any changes or updates to the current park master plan that was originally approved in June 1979. The purpose of the Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) is twofold. First, it describes elimination of facilities previously planned but not built that are no longer appropriate or needed in the park. Second, the CDP contains descriptions of the concept plan elements, design concerns and a plan that shows the general locations of recommended facilities.

1. *Elimination of Previously Master Planned Facilities*

   The following facilities are recommended for elimination from the previous master plan for the park:

   - Manager's Residence
   - Gate Houses at Lake Fairfax Drive
   - Water Slide (separate stand-alone facility)
   - Wave Action Pool (separate stand-alone facility)
   - Ice Rink
   - Main Parking Lot Lighting
   - Trailer Parking (10 spaces)
   - Frisbee Golf Course
   - Basketball/Multi-Use Court - Lighted
   - Tennis Courts - Lighted

- Multi-Purpose Field Lighting
- Open Play Field
- Campground 'D'
- Entrance Road at Hunter Mill Road Bridge
- Pedestrian Underpass
- Adventure Playground

2. Description of New Plan Elements

a. Park Entrance Image

The two existing park entrance gate houses located at Lake Fairfax Drive, currently no longer in use, should be removed as soon as possible. A park entrance image should be developed that would effectively redesign the existing entrance to be functional as well as aesthetically pleasing. This can be accomplished through the use of trees, shrubs, groundcovers and possibly other landscape elements. A gate structure is desired but gatehouses will not be required. Provisions should also be made to provide a trail alignment into the park to accommodate pedestrian traffic.

b. Core Facilities

The park 'core' includes the park offices, Water Mine, lake waterfront activities, food service area, restrooms, carousel, mini-train, mini-golf and adjacent parking areas. This area should be viewed as a focal point or destination for people gatherings where people can interact, whether meeting simply to enjoy park activities or just relax. A park 'village'square or plaza theme is envisioned, with aesthetically pleasing elements such as wide walkways, adequate seating, shade trees and architectural elements (possibly a gazebo, information kiosk, picnic shelter, etc.). A food court with a variety of option choices is desirable and should be available to park patrons within the core area as well as inside the Water Mine enclosure. The lake front activity experience should be optimized to become a major feature within the core area. Activities should include lake tour boat rides, individual paddle boats rentals, a boardwalk area and walking trails. A natural surface and boardwalk trail should be considered to circumnavigate the lake only to the extent it does not intrude on the ecology or vistas of the lake. Waysides with comfortable benches for quiet relaxation should be created along the perimeter trail alignment. A stand-alone restroom facility should also be constructed within the core area. The carousel, mini-train and playground/totlot areas are also important elements within the core area and should be used to emphasize opportunities for children. Development of the core area is intended to increase off-season usage of the park, to extend visitor attendance in the spring and fall season, as well as the typical summer months. Many favorable weather days occur during these 'off-season' months when families could continue to enjoy outdoor activities at the park.

1. Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole

The Water Mine is a medium-sized leisure aquatic facility featuring a 27,000 square foot shallow water main pool surrounded by a 600-foot lazy river. Water features in the main pool include: 11 and 14 foot multi-drop slides, four smaller slides, a water crossing feature, a raindrop, a water cannon, two zero depth beach entries, a small tot pool and an assortment of floatables. Amenities include a bathouse, food service window/ table area, numerous 20-foot shade umbrellas and lounge furniture. The facility incorporates an old west, gold rush style theme.

A feasibility study should be undertaken to address the issue of possible Water Mine expansion within the current fenced area in order to address crowding within the facility and to offer the leisure aquatic experience to possibly more than one age group. The present facility appeals primarily to young families with pre-teens. Possible expansion elements might include, but not be limited to, slides, splash playgrounds and other leisure aquatic features.

2. Main Parking Lot Area

The main parking lot serving the core area contains approximately 800 parking spaces. The area should be redesigned for optimal efficiency and effectiveness for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The area should ultimately be asphalt surfaced with curb and gutter or concrete wheelstops for space definition.

c. Off-Leash Dog Area

An off-leash dog area, with a minimum size of one-quarter acre and a preferred size of one-half acre or larger, is identified in the general area of the athletic fields. The area would be contained by a 5 ft. high chain link perimeter fence. Double gated entryways shall be provided for safety and to provide a neutral zone for dogs to be leashed/ unleashed. A single, large, gated opening will be needed to allow access to mowing and maintenance vehicles. A parking area to support 20 spaces is recommended adjacent to the off-leash dog area.

d. Skate Park

A skate park is recommended for Lake Fairfax Park under a possible public/private partnership agreement with the Reston Community Center (RCC). The Lake Fairfax site is one of several possible locations under consideration for development by RCC. A decision on the exact site is to be made in the future.

A facility of up to 25,000 sq. ft. or more in size is recommended in the area adjacent to the existing athletic fields at the park. An exact location would be determined during the detail design phase of the project. The skate park should have a suitable surface and should be fenced with 10 ft. high black vinyl chain link for security and should be lighted to allow night time use. Spectator seating should be included with construction of this facility.

RCC recommends a size of at least 15,000 sf. in the initial development phase. The facility would be managed and supervised during all hours of operation. Development suggestions for consideration also include a shelter-type roof structure to provide protection from the elements, to extend the useable season and to enhance light and noise pollution abatement concerns. Parking for 20 cars should also be included. Funding for the initial development phase would be provided by the RCC if the Lake Fairfax Park site is selected. Other sites within Reston, however, are also under active consideration. Subsequent development phases, if any, may be funded possibly using public and /or private funds. If the RCC selects an alternative location within Reston, not at Lake Fairfax Park, the area designated at Lake Fairfax should then be open to development proposals by other public/private organizations. The possibility of skate park development should not be eliminated if the RCC develops elsewhere.

3. Description of Existing Plan Elements to be Retained on the Master Plan

a. Mini-Golf Area

This facility should be a well designed 18-hole miniature golf course located in such a way as to enhance the other facilities in the core area. A small ticket and control building will be provided adjacent to the course.

b. Carousel
The carousel should be enclosed in an octagonal structure that will shelter it from the elements and provide an increased measure of security when not in use.

c. Mini-Train
The park formerly had a 16 gauge miniature train that did not meet County safety regulations and was removed from the park. The mini-train should be replaced with one of similar stature for the enjoyment of young park visitors. The rail bed alignment should be expanded within the core area of the park including the possibility of an alignment around the lake shore to provide a broader visitor experience. Opportunities should also be explored with private groups to provide the railroad experience on a volunteer basis at the park.

d. Park Control/Information Center
This structure would function as a central clearinghouse for access to any of the other facilities in this area. Fees would be collected. The structure would contain such facilities as park management offices, community rooms, storage space and public restrooms.

e. Boat Rental
A dock area and small rental boat house would be upgraded on the lake shore in the core area. Watercraft such as canoes and paddleboats are available for rent. A tour boat also operates on the lake. Tickets are available at the park office.

f. Lake Activities
In addition to the boat rental, fishing is allowed at all accessible points along the lakeshore. Accessibility issues need to be investigated during the Project Implementation Phase prior to construction. Currently, lake swimming is prohibited because of water turbidity and other safety issues.

g. Family & Group Picnic Areas
These areas are generally located within floodplain areas of the park which is an accepted use of this area. These areas are available for picnicing under both a first come, first served and reservation basis.

h. Play Apparatus/Totlot
The existing playground at the park should be expanded to provide for 2 distinct play groups, one for children ages 2 - 5 and a second group of children ages 5 - 12. Play events that allow for social interaction, role playing and cognitive achievement, to name a few, should be included. Permanent resilient surfacing should be installed to provide for safety and accessibility of the area. Adjacent parking spaces, benches and picnic tables should also be included.

i. Multi-Purpose Field (Not Permanently Lighted)
The multi-purpose athletic field is approximately 450 ft. x 950 ft., the size of four full size rectangular fields. One third of the field space is used for scheduled cricket games. The remaining space is un-programmed and serves as a venue area for special events and demonstrations such as equipment shows and dog shows. This multi-purpose area is the only remaining open space of its kind within the park system inventory for this purpose. The facility is served by an asphalt parking lot configured for 160 spaces.

j. Maintenance Shop
A small building with three-truck bays, storage and office space is located within a fenced maintenance yard. This facility is currently used by Area VI Management and Lake Fairfax Park maintenance crews. All former storage and maintenance functions located at the north end of the lake should be relocated to this area. Unused buildings, etc. in the former maintenance area should be demolished and the land should be restored to prevent soil erosion.

k. Restroom Building
This facility is situated within the grouped picnic area but serves all nearby park facilities. The building should be replaced with a new expanded facility to meet current and future needs as well as ADA requirements.

l. Campgrounds
A total of 78 campsites are found within Camp Area 'A' that include accommodations for anything from tents up to large recreational vehicles. Appropriate sites should be upgraded with 3 point (city water, sewer & 50 amp. electric) service hookups. Camp Area 'B' has been designed but not built. This area should be developed as soon as funds become available. Camp Area 'C' is designated as a group camping area containing primarily tents.

Shower/restroom facilities should be upgraded in all areas as funds become available.

m. Camp Store/Interpretive Center
This building, currently designed but not built, should serve the needs of the campers and trail hikers in the area. It may contain a small office, store area for the sale of camping supplies, a reservations desk, restrooms, a laundry as well as a lounge and multi-purpose room. It would also house an interpretive center that would provide orientation demonstrations and displays to the users of the passive aspects of the park.

n. Amphitheater
The existing stage and amphitheater seating 80 to 100 people will serve the area for interpretive lectures and presentations and serve as a central gathering point for campers due to the proximity of the campgrounds.

o. Group Campground
An area within the Resource Protection Area provides group camping activities. This area includes a shower/restroom building and five (5) main camp areas each containing ten (10) sites.

p. Athletic Fields

A total of seven (7) athletic fields currently exist at the park. Two are configured as diamond fields (lighted) and the remaining fields are rectangular. Lighting has previously been approved for three (3) of the rectangular fields (those fields closest to the southern boundary of the park) but has not yet been implemented. The task force recommends that field lighting be implemented as soon as possible in order to address field deficiency issues.

Parking for the athletic fields is accommodated in two separate parking areas. An asphalt parking lot with 153 spaces is situated adjacent to the athletic fields area. A gravel parking area with 75 spaces is situated adjacent to the rectangular fields. The gravel surface should be upgraded to asphalt when funds become available. Concrete wheel stops should replace the timber units currently in place.

q. Resource Management Area (RMA) (formerly Managed Conservation Area)

Human impact in this area will be kept to a minimum. Management of the natural and cultural resources will be allowed but degradation of this area shall be prohibited. Potential uses of the RMA shall include trails and trail support facilities; wildlife and habitat management; research, interpretation and education and short-term recreation.

The RMA's at Lake Fairfax Park should provide an interpretive experience that will meet the needs of the local community and park visitors. This can be accomplished through self-guided trails, wayside exhibits and signage and detailed interpretive programs. This area will also benefit from a partnership between the Fairfax County Park Authority and the National Wildlife Federation situated adjacent to the park, through interpretative programming events to be scheduled. Trail development within the RMA shall be coordinated with the Resource Management Division and the trail coordinator.

r. Park Shuttle (formerly Rubber Tire Train)

A shuttle vehicle, which operates on a paved roadway, would function as a mass transit link within the park as well as selected points beyond the park. Within the park, a loop system connecting all major facilities, including the camping area, day use area, Water Mine, etc. would be developed. The shuttle would also tie other areas such as Metro bus stop at Baron Cameron Avenue, trail heads to Colvin Run Mill/National Wildlife Federation, etc. to the internal park loop. An alternative worthy of investigation would be commercial services as provided by Reston Internal Bus System (RIBS) or the Fairfax Connector (bus lines).

s. Day Camp Area

An open shelter structure should be set aside in the area north of the lake in the former maintenance shop area to provide an orientation point for day camp activities and to serve as a picnic shelter rental facility on weekends when not used by the day camp program. The shelter may contain a number of picnic tables and a storage area for supplies. Public restrooms should also be included in this area.

t. Trails

A series of trails of varying widths and surfaces should connect all facilities within the park and tie the park to the surrounding neighborhoods. Selected trails should be 8 ft. wide and paved. Existing trails within the park include a portion

of the Rails to River Trail - connecting the W&OD Regional Trail with the Potomac River. This major county multi-use trail (including equestrian and mountain bike use) connects through an easement to the W&OD, then runs generally along Colvin Run within the park, exiting at the Hunter Mill Road bridge across the creek. The trail continues northeast to Route 7 and Colvin Run Mill, where it becomes a part of the route of the Cross County Trail to Great Falls National Park. County trails within the park also include a trail paralleling Hunter Mill Road for more than a half mile, providing a way to travel that portion of the road on bike, foot or horse. Other existing trails within the park provide for pedestrian access between facilities and interpretive trails in the Managed Conservation Area. For further discussion of trails, a Trail Management Plan for the Park should be developed following master plan approval.

4. Development Priority Order Recommendation

A development priority order recommendation by the Lake Fairfax Task Force is shown below. Development priority is important as a general guideline of which facilities to develop first as funding becomes available. Those facilities appearing on the list are recommended for development in priority order.

1. Core Facilities
2. Athletic Fields
3. Park Control/Information Center*
4. Park Entrance Image*
5. Restroom Building
6. Trails
7. Lake Activities*
8. Mini-Train*
9. Play Apparatus/Totlot*
10. Carousel*
11. Campgrounds
12. Resource Protection
13. Boat Rental*
14. Camp Store/Interpretive Center
15. Mini-Golf*
16. Family & Group Picnic
17. Day Camp*
18. Maintenance Shop
19. Park Shuttle
20. Multi-Purpose Field
21. Group Campgrounds
22. Amphitheater
23. Off-Leash Dog Area

* These individual facilities are considered elements within the Core Facilities Area

No development priority was assigned to the skate park. This priority listing does not preclude the Park Authority from developing facilities out of order if the opportunity presents itself, ie. park donation or developer proffer, etc.

B. Staff Project Team Recommendation

The staff project team concurs with the recommendation submitted by the Lake Fairfax Citizen Task Force. The development priority recommendation as shown above will be considered by the project scoping team in the next phase of development along with other considerations based on financial constraints, needs analysis and project management criteria.

All asphalt roads within the park that require maintenance should be repaved and widened, if necessary, to current park standards. All gravel parking areas should be paved to meet Fairfax County Public Facilities Manual standards.

C. Design Concerns:

1. Because of the potential for both prehistoric and historic resources on the park, the Cultural Resource Protection Group makes the following recommendation: A systematic professional archaeological survey should be conducted on those areas slated for earth-disturbing development that: 1) were not previously developed or disturbed (other than by plowing); and 2) that have topographic characteristics that are favorable for

human use (e.g., not steeply sloped, out of flood plain, etc.).

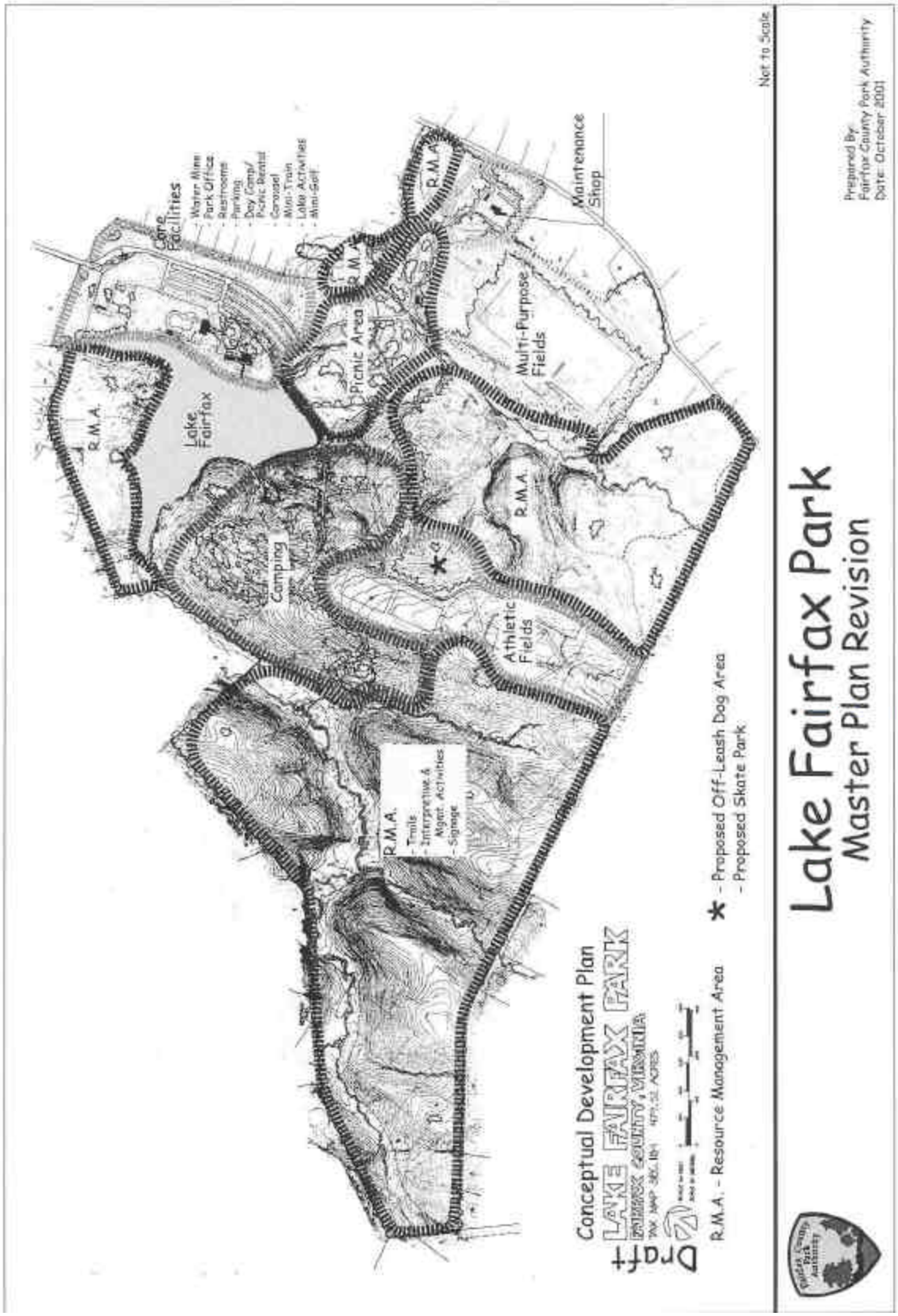
2. The existing entrance road accessing the multi-purpose fields should be widened as soon as possible to improve traffic flow, especially during peak use periods.

3. Total footprint of the Water Mine remain within the existing fence line.

4. Estimates for increases in park usage (based on new park elements such as expanded Water Mine, mini-golf, etc.) will be of high interest to the surrounding community. Informational meetings should be held with neighborhood homeowners associations after the consultant feasibility study is completed.

5. The RMA will be impacted by development on the Bachman Property or construction of a stormwater management facility within the park.

10/24/01


Lake Fairfax Park
Master Plan Revision
Conceptual Development Plan
LAKE FAIRFAX PARK
FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA
Draft
R.M.A. - Resource Management Area
* - Proposed Off-Leash Dog Area
- Proposed Skate Park
Not to Scale
Prepared By:
Fairfax County Park Authority
Date: October 2001
Lake Fairfax
Core Facilities
- Water Slide
- Park Office
- Restrooms
- Parking
- Day Camp/
Picnic Rental
- Carousel
- Mini-Train
- Lake Activities
- Mini-Golf
Picnic Area
Multi-Purpose Fields
Maintenance Shop
Camping
Athletic Fields
R.M.A.
- Trails
- Interpretive &
Night Activities
- Signage