



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927
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Sully Woodlands Regional Master Plan NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES PUBLIC WORKSHOP July 11, 2004—Rocky Run Middle School

ATTENDANCE

FCPA Board Members: Hal Strickland, Chairman, Sully District; Harry Glasgow, At-Large

FCPA Staff: Cindy Messinger, Resource Management Division Director; Angie Allen, Project Manager; Heather Melchior, Natural Resource Management and Protection Section Manager; Charles Smith, Natural Resources Management and Protection Section; Liz Crowell, Cultural Resource Management and Protection Section Manager; John Rutherford, Cultural Resource Management and Protection Section; Leon Nawojchik, Ellanor C. Lawrence Site Manager; Sherry Frear, Park Planning; Andi Dorlester, Park Planning

Citizens: 24 citizens

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What resources are important and why?
 - Identify the critical resources
 - Identify issues & threats
 - Identify management needs
2. What do you want the experience to be at Sully Woodlands?
 - Describe overall vision
 - Identify education & interpretation opportunities
 - Identify needed visitor amenities & desired location

SUMMARY OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

RED GROUP

Question 1

Critical Resources

- Water is a priority resource—streams, ponds, creeks, wetlands
- Undisturbed and intact landscapes
- Unique resources—archeological sites, rare plants/plant communities (Oak Hickory Forest), animal habitats (eagles) that are different than anywhere else in the County

Issues/Threats

- Development—includes park development (active recreation), roads, road improvements
- Lack of selective or strategic planning—discussed that certain areas should be potentially looked at for development, other places should have no access or very limited public access (Oak Hickory Forest), discussed balancing the need for recreation with preservation goals (though differing opinions in group), should revisit existing parks to see if they can help meet development needs
- Invasive plants
- Fragmentation of land
- Traffic & road improvements

Management Need

- Review management recommendation on a regular basis (5 years?) to make sure they are still current and effective

Question 2

Desired Experience

- Education on the history and natural resources of the area
- Opportunity to use schools and existing parks for education
- Encourage resident ownership of parks
- Buffer
- Preservation of cultural and natural resources

Amenities

- Range of trail types
- Controlled or limited access to most sensitive resources—possibly park interpreter/naturalist led walks, but no paved or formal trails
- Connectivity of parks—example of Olmsted park system in Louisville
- Concentrate parking away from sensitive areas
- Co-locate parking with existing facilities (Westfields HS, RECenter)
- Nature Center—co-located at Cub Run RECenter or Walney
- Elements of “green buildings”—solar energy, composting toilets

ORANGE/PURPLE GROUP

Question 1

Critical Resources

- Watershed
- Forests
- Farms—e.g. Pleasant Valley where there is an 1800s barn
- Habitat for birds
- Connectivity among natural areas is important
- Existing equestrian trails should be retained

Issues/Threats/Management Needs

- Coscan/Brookfield property was the result of cluster zoning and remaining land was donated to the Park Authority. This parkland should not be turned into ballfields or courts. As part of the rezoning it was to remain undeveloped. Conservation easement should not be removed.
- Loss of archeological resources due to road realignment at Old Lee Highway
- Loudon development
- Poor drainage
- Possible changes to existing park master plans—will areas currently slated to remain as open space be “swapped” for other areas?
- Increasing number of people using resources
- Tri-County Parkway, especially disruptive for wildlife corridors

Question 2

Desired Experience/Amenities

- Therapeutic riding
- Museum of equestrian history
- Equestrian trail system
- Network of trails appropriate to each area—paved trails in developed areas, natural surface trails in natural areas
- Educational opportunities that aren’t disruptive—interpretive trails, kiosks, nature center, outdoor classroom.
- Coordinated tri-county official archaeological effort.
- Better accommodation of horse trailers in parking lots—larger turn around areas.
- Guided riding trails
- Strategically located parking lots with selective access—parking lots shouldn’t be scattered throughout the area but rather “grouped” to reduce the impact of vehicles traveling throughout the area.
- Areas without parking.
- Need to balance human/car impacts.
- Need to scientifically track car impact, e.g., in the way it’s been studied by the NPS out West, to determine maximum vehicle capacity and then limit vehicular traffic to prevent degrading resources.

BLUE/GREEN GROUP

Question 1

Critical Resources

- Preservation of viewsheds from Manassas Battlefield—don’t cut down swaths of trees
- Stream valleys, rare species—protection is important

Issues/Threats

- Don’t develop ball fields/active recreation before the main roads are widened.
- There is great concern about what is happening just over the border in Loudoun County

Management Needs

- Clean-up debris and fallen trees close to trails, but don’t “sanitize” the area

Question 2

Desired Experience/Amenities

- Have limited access to special areas (wildlife protection areas)
- Supervised access to sensitive areas (with naturalist or historian)
- Keep trails natural and don't construct large, wide asphalt or gravel trails
- Provide connections to neighboring parklands (Bull Run, Manassas Battlefield)
- Make everything accessible, but balance public access with preservation
- Begin guided walking tours of the area NOW
- Don't block off access to important cultural resources (i.e. don't put up fences like at Balmoral)
- Provide a trails network that allows for primitive camping
- Provide a comprehensive pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian trail system that connects communities and parks
- Trails should be well-designed and well-placed so they are usable year round (i.e. not flooded)
- Make sure trail connections provide safe passage at road crossings (over, under)
- Use small pull-off areas along main roads to provide access points to people arriving in cars
- Provide campsites for scouts and others to do primitive hiking and camping

Education & Interpretation Opportunities

- There is a need for better awareness and an identity to the area
- People don't know what is there
- Do education/outreach to the surrounding communities so they know what is there
- Provide a nature/interpretive center for educational purposes – perhaps at or near the Cub Run RECenter or at EC Lawrence Park, not necessarily a new building in the Woodlands
- Education should be about both natural resources and cultural and historical significance
- Develop a brochure that allows people to do self-guided tours
- Don't put up too many interpretive signs, just a small number of well-placed ones
- Provide information on the Internet